

INTRODUCTION

II. AREOPAGITICUS



## INTRODUCTION

IN 355 B.C. ended the deplorable "Social War," which Athens waged against the most powerful members of her Confederacy in the effort to compel them to remain under her sway. She was not successful: Chios, Cos, Rhodes, and Byzantium were conceded their independence. But there remained still under her influence the many weaker members of her maritime empire; and peace, as usual, brought a sense of great relief and of false security.

This is the very time which Isocrates found opportune for addressing the Athenians on the "public safety."<sup>a</sup> The strength of a state, he warns them, consists, not in the walls which gird a city, but in the quality of its citizenship and in the spirit which animates its polity. In this respect, Athens has no ground whatever for pride or even for complacency; for her life has become, he maintains, unsound at the core. She is far from being now what she was in the days of the old democracy of Solon and of Cleisthenes.

We must be on our guard against the pictures of

<sup>a</sup> This is the view of most competent scholars as to the date of the *Areopagiticus*. See Jebb, *Attic Orators* ii. p. 204; Blass, *Die attische Beredsamkeit* ii. p. 305; Karl Müncher's introduction to the *Areopagiticus* in his revision of Rauchenstein's edition.



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degeneracy found in Isocrates and in the other orators and philosophers of the fourth century. But even when we make due allowance for exaggeration in the contrasts which are drawn between the "golden age" and the present, we do well to reckon with the fact of a change which was not for the better.<sup>a</sup>

Pericles, in the funeral oration recorded by Thucydides, said of the Athenians: "Their bodies they devote to their country as though they belonged to other men: their true self is their mind, which is most truly their own when employed in her service." That expresses something more than an ideal of the older democracy. How closely the life of the individual was in fact bound up with that of the state is revealed in the common use of the word πολιτεύεσθαι, *to live as a citizen*, instead of the bare term *to live*. But in the fourth century, the Athenians were living more and more their own lives, selfishly pursuing their own business or living off the state rather than for it, and craving increasingly the liberty to "do as they liked."

Isocrates' diagnosis of the trouble and his remedy for it are, no doubt, over-simple. The weakness of Athens he attributes mainly to an excess of "freedom." Pure democracy is not to his liking—a polity in which election by lot is the last word in the equalization of opportunity and the levelling of all distinctions. He pleads for a return to the restricted democracy of Solon and of Cleisthenes, in which the people possessed the sovereign power to elect their leaders, but only from the best qualified citizens,

<sup>a</sup> See General Introd. pp. xxxvii ff.; Jebb, *Attic Orators* ii. pp. 14 ff.



## ISOCRATES

and to hold them strictly to account for their conduct in office—an aristocracy in effect. Specifically, he pleads for the restoration of the old powers of the Council of the Areopagus. That Council had in early times possessed almost unlimited authority. In Solon's time it was still the greatest power of the state, being entrusted with the guardianship of the laws, with the supervision over the education of youth, with a general censorship over the lives of the citizens, and with final authority to fine or otherwise punish offenders against law, custom, or taste.<sup>a</sup>

No doubt it irritated many by its conservative influence and sometimes abused its power, but it is noteworthy that it was everywhere and at all times held in high respect. Aeschylus's tribute to it in the *Eumenides*,<sup>b</sup> put in the mouth of Athena, the guardian deity of the state, is an eloquent expression of the common feeling :

This Court, majestic, incorruptible,  
Instant in anger, over those who sleep,  
The sleepless watcher of my land I set.<sup>c</sup>

It continued to be held in awe even after Ephialtes, in the interest of a more complete democracy, had shorn it of most of its powers. But from this time on, Isocrates holds, Athenian life declined in the matter of sober living and of willing service to the state—a view in which he is supported by the circumstantial account of Aristotle in his sketch of the development of the Athenian constitution.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> See 37, note.

<sup>b</sup> 683 ff.

<sup>c</sup> Jebb's translation.

<sup>d</sup> See his *Constitution of Athens* 26.



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The discourse is cast in the form of an oration appropriate to be delivered before the General Assembly of Athens, and the fiction is consistently maintained throughout, although it was composed entirely for a reading public.<sup>a</sup>

• See General Introd. p. xxx.



## ΑΡΕΟΠΑΓΙΤΙΚΟΣ

- [140] Πολλοὺς ὑμῶν οἶμαι θαυμάζειν ἥντινά ποτε γνώμην ἔχων περὶ σωτηρίας τὴν πρόσοδον ἐποίησά-  
 μην, ὥσπερ τῆς πόλεως ἐν κινδύνοις οὕσης ἢ  
 σφαλερῶς αὐτῇ τῶν πραγμάτων καθεστηκότων,  
 ἀλλ' οὐ πλείους μὲν τριήρεις ἢ διακοσίας κεκτη-  
 μένης, εἰρήνην δὲ καὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν χώραν ἀγούσης,  
 2 καὶ τῶν κατὰ θάλατταν ἀρχούσης, ἔτι δὲ συμ-  
 μάχους ἐχούσης πολλοὺς μὲν τοὺς ἐτοίμως ἡμῖν,  
 ἢν τι δέη, βοηθήσοντας, πολὺ δὲ πλείους τοὺς  
 τὰς συντάξεις ὑποτελοῦντας καὶ τὸ προσταττό-  
 μενον ποιοῦντας· ὧν ὑπαρχόντων ἡμᾶς μὲν ἂν τις  
 φήσειεν εἰκὸς εἶναι θαρρεῖν ὥς πόρρω τῶν κινδύνων  
 ὄντας, τοῖς δ' ἐχθροῖς τοῖς ἡμετέροις προσήκειν  
 δεδιέναι καὶ βουλευέσθαι περὶ τῆς αὐτῶν σωτηρίας.  
 3 Ὑμεῖς μὲν οὖν οἶδ' ὅτι τούτῳ χρώμενοι τῷ  
 λογισμῷ καὶ τῆς ἐμῆς προσόδου καταφρονεῖτε,  
 καὶ πᾶσαν ἐλπίζετε τὴν Ἑλλάδα ταύτῃ τῇ δυνάμει  
 κατασχῆσιν· ἐγὼ δὲ δι' αὐτὰ ταῦτα τυγχάνω  
 δεδιώς. ὁρῶ γὰρ τῶν πόλεων τὰς ἄριστα πράττειν

<sup>a</sup> Strictly, what my purpose *was*. The aorist tense reflects the fact that the Athenian orators had to give written notice, in advance, of any subject they proposed to discuss before the General Assembly. See § 15.

<sup>b</sup> The second Athenian Confederacy, organized in 378 B.C. See General Introd. p. xxxvii.



## II. AREOPAGITICUS

MANY of you are wondering, I suppose, what in the world my purpose is<sup>a</sup> in coming forward to address you on *the public safety*, as if Athens were in danger or her affairs on an uncertain footing, when in fact she possesses more than two hundred ships-of-war, enjoys peace throughout her territory, maintains her empire on the sea,<sup>b</sup> and has, furthermore, many allies who, in case of any need, will readily come to her aid,<sup>c</sup> and many more allies who are paying their contributions<sup>d</sup> and obeying her commands. With these resources, one might argue that we have every reason to feel secure, as being far removed from danger, while our enemies may well be anxious and take thought for their own safety.

Now you, I know, following this reasoning, disdain my coming forward, and are confident that with this power you will hold all Hellas under your control. But as for myself, it is because of these very things that I am anxious; for I observe that those cities

<sup>a</sup> He refers here, probably, to allies by special treaty as distinguished from the allies next mentioned, who were members of the Confederacy and under the leadership of Athens. The latter paid their quotas into the Athenian treasury for the support of the Confederate navy.

<sup>d</sup> In the second Confederacy the word *σύνταξις* (contribution) was used instead of *φóρος* (tribute) which became an odious term in the Confederacy of Delos. Cf. *Antid.* 123.



οἰομένας κάκιστα βουλευομένας καὶ τὰς μάλιστα  
 θαρρούσας εἰς πλείστους κινδύνους καθισταμένας.  
 4 αἴτιον δὲ τούτων ἐστίν, ὅτι τῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ τῶν  
 κακῶν οὐδὲν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ παραγίγνεται τοῖς  
 ἀνθρώποις, ἀλλὰ συντέτακται καὶ συνακολουθεῖ  
 τοῖς μὲν πλούτοις καὶ ταῖς δυναστείαις ἄνοια καὶ  
 μετὰ ταύτης ἀκολασία, ταῖς δ' ἐνδείαις καὶ ταῖς  
 [141] ταπεινότησι σωφροσύνη καὶ πολλὴ μετριότης,  
 5 ὥστε χαλεπὸν εἶναι διαγνῶναι ποτέραν ἂν τις  
 δέξαιτο τῶν μερίδων τούτων τοῖς παισὶ τοῖς  
 αὐτοῦ καταλιπεῖν. ἴδοιμεν γὰρ ἂν ἐκ μὲν τῆς  
 φαυλοτέρας εἶναι δοκούσης ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον ὥς ἐπὶ  
 τὸ πολὺ τὰς πράξεις ἐπιδιδούσας, ἐκ δὲ τῆς  
 κρείττονος φαινομένης ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον εἰθισμένας  
 6 μεταπίπτειν. καὶ τούτων ἐνεγκεῖν ἔχω παρα-  
 δείγματα πλεῖστα μὲν ἐκ τῶν ἰδιωτικῶν πραγ-  
 μάτων, πυκνοτάτας γὰρ ταῦτα λαμβάνει τὰς  
 μεταβολάς, οὐ μὲν ἀλλὰ μείζω γε καὶ φανερώτερα  
 τοῖς ἀκούουσιν ἐκ τῶν ἡμῖν καὶ Λακεδαιμονίοις  
 συμβάντων. ἡμεῖς τε γὰρ ἀναστάτου μὲν τῆς  
 πόλεως ὑπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων γεγεννημένης διὰ τὸ  
 δεδιέναι καὶ προσέχειν τὸν νοῦν τοῖς πράγμασιν  
 ἐπρωτεύσαμεν τῶν Ἑλλήνων, ἐπειδὴ δ' ἀν-  
 υπέρβλητον ὠήθημεν τὴν δύναμιν ἔχειν, παρὰ  
 7 μικρὸν ἤλθομεν ἐξανδραποδισθῆναι. Λακεδαιμόνιοί  
 τε τὸ μὲν παλαιὸν ἐκ φαύλων καὶ ταπεινῶν πόλεων

<sup>a</sup> See General Introd. p. xxxiii.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. *Archid.* 103 ff.

<sup>c</sup> Athens, then an unwallled city, was temporarily abandoned by her people before the Battle of Salamis, and destroyed by the troops of Xerxes. After the Persian Wars, she became the head of the Confederacy of Delos. See *Archid.* 42 ff., and *Paneg.* 71-72.



## AREOPAGITICUS, 3-7

which think they are in the best circumstances are wont to adopt the worst policies, and that those which feel the most secure are most often involved in danger. The cause of this is that nothing of either good or of evil visits mankind unmixed, but that riches and power are attended and followed by folly, and folly in turn by licence;<sup>a</sup> whereas poverty and lowliness are attended by sobriety and great moderation; so that it is hard to decide which of these lots one should prefer to bequeath to one's own children. For we shall find that from a lot which seems to be inferior men's fortunes generally advance to a better condition,<sup>b</sup> whereas from one which appears to be superior they are wont to change to a worse. Of this truth I might cite examples without number from the lives of individual men, since these are subject to the most frequent vicissitudes; but instances which are more important and better known to my hearers may be drawn from the experiences of our city and of the Lacedaemonians. As for the Athenians, after our city had been laid waste by the barbarians, we became, because we were anxious about the future and gave attention to our affairs, the foremost of the Hellenes;<sup>c</sup> whereas, when we imagined that our power was invincible, we barely escaped being enslaved.<sup>d</sup> Likewise the Lacedaemonians, after having set out in ancient times from obscure and humble cities, made themselves, because

<sup>a</sup> At the end of the Peloponnesian War, Athens was at the mercy of Sparta and the Spartan allies. The latter proposed that Athens be utterly destroyed and her citizens sold into slavery, but the Spartans refused to allow the city "which had done a great service to Hellas" to be reduced to slavery. *Xen. Hell.* ii. 2. 19-20. *Cf. Peace* 78, 105; *Plataicus* 32; *Antid.* 319.



ὀρμηθέντες διὰ τὸ σωφρόνως ζῆν καὶ στρατιω-  
τικῶς κατέσχον Πελοπόννησον, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα  
μεῖζον φρονήσαντες τοῦ δέοντος, καὶ λαβόντες  
καὶ τὴν κατὰ γῆν καὶ τὴν κατὰ θάλατταν ἀρχήν,  
εἰς τοὺς αὐτοὺς κινδύνους κατέστησαν ἡμῖν.

8 "Οστις οὖν εἰδὼς τοσαύτας μεταβολὰς γεγενη-  
μένας καὶ τηλικαύτας δυνάμεις οὕτω ταχέως  
ἀναιρεθείσας πιστεύει τοῖς παροῦσι, λίαν ἀνόητός  
ἐστιν, ἄλλως τε καὶ τῆς μὲν πόλεως ἡμῶν πολὺ  
καταδεέστερον νῦν πραττούσης ἢ κατ' ἐκείνον  
τὸν χρόνον, τοῦ δὲ μίσους τοῦ τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ  
τῆς ἔχθρας τῆς πρὸς βασιλέα πάλιν ἀνακεκαι-  
νισμένης, ἃ τότε κατεπολέμησεν ἡμᾶς.

9 Ἀπορῶ δὲ πότερον ὑπολάβω μηδὲν μέλειν ὑμῖν  
τῶν κοινῶν πραγμάτων ἢ φροντίζειν μὲν αὐτῶν,  
εἰς τοῦτο δ' ἀναισθησίας ἦκειν ὥστε λανθάνειν  
ὑμᾶς εἰς ὅσην ταραχὴν ἡ πόλις καθέστηκεν.  
εἰοίκατε γὰρ οὕτω διακειμένοις ἀνθρώποις, οἵτινες  
ἀπάσας μὲν τὰς πόλεις τὰς ἐπὶ Θράκης ἀπ-  
ολωλεκότες, πλείω δ' ἢ χίλια τάλαντα μάτην εἰς  
10 τοὺς ξένους ἀνηλωκότες, πρὸς δὲ τοὺς Ἕλληνας  
διαβεβλημένοι καὶ τῷ βαρβάρῳ πολέμιοι γεγονότες,

\* See *Paneg.* 61; *Panath.* 253 ff.

† The Spartan supremacy began with the triumph over Athens in 404 B.C. and ended with the defeat at Leuctra, 371 B.C. See Vol. I. p. 402, footnote. Cf. *Phil.* 47. After Leuctra, Athens, in her turn, saved Sparta from destruction. See *Phil.* 44 and note.

° For the language cf. *Archid.* 48.

ª By the bitter "Social War." See General Introd. p. xxxviii.



## AREOPAGITICUS, 7-10

they lived temperately and under military discipline, masters of the Peloponnesus ;<sup>a</sup> whereas later, when they grew overweening and seized the empire both of the sea and of the land, they fell into the same dangers as ourselves.<sup>b</sup>

Whoever, therefore, knowing that such great vicissitudes have taken place and that such mighty powers have been so quickly brought to naught, yet trusts in our present circumstances, is all too foolish,<sup>c</sup> especially since Athens is now in a much less favourable condition than she was at that time, while the hatred<sup>d</sup> of us among the Hellenes and the enmity<sup>e</sup> of the great King, which then brought disaster to our arms, have been again revived.

I am in doubt whether to suppose that you care nothing for the public welfare or that you are concerned about it, but have become so obtuse that you fail to see into what utter confusion our city has fallen. For you resemble men in that state of mind—you who have lost all the cities in Thrace,<sup>f</sup> squandered to no purpose more than a thousand talents on mercenary troops,<sup>g</sup> provoked the ill-will of the Hellenes and the hostility of the barbarians, and, as if this were not enough, have been compelled

<sup>a</sup> In the course of the " Social War," the Athenian general Chares had aided the satrap Artabazus in his revolt against Artaxerxes III. See Diodorus xvi. 22.

<sup>f</sup> Not all the cities on the northern coast of the Aegean (Thrace), but those on the Chalcidian peninsula, notably Amphipolis, Pydna, Potidaea, and Olynthus, which had fallen under the power or under the influence of Philip of Macedon. See Demosthenes' first *Philippic* 4.

<sup>g</sup> Athenian forces were now largely made up of paid foreigners, recruited from everywhere. See *Peace* 44-47 ; Demosthenes' first *Philippic* 20.



ἔτι δὲ τοὺς μὲν Θηβαίων φίλους σώζειν ἡναγ-  
 [142] κασμένοι, τοὺς δ' ἡμετέρους αὐτῶν συμμάχους  
 ἀπολωλεκότες, ἐπὶ τοιαύταις πράξεσιν εὐαγγέλια  
 μὲν δὲς ἤδη τεθύκαμεν, ῥαθυμότερον δὲ περὶ  
 αὐτῶν ἐκκλησιάζομεν τῶν πάντα τὰ δέοντα  
 πραττόντων.

11 Καὶ ταῦτ' εἰκότως καὶ ποιούμεεν καὶ πάσχομεν.  
 οὐδὲν γὰρ οἶόντε γίγνεσθαι κατὰ τρόπον τοῖς μὴ  
 καλῶς περὶ ὅλης τῆς διοικήσεως βεβουλευμένοις,  
 ἀλλ' ἐὰν καὶ κατορθώσωσι περί τινος τῶν πράξεων  
 ἢ διὰ τύχην ἢ δι' ἀνδρὸς ἀρετὴν, μικρὸν δια-  
 λιπόντες πάλιν εἰς τὰς αὐτὰς ἀπορίας κατέστησαν.

καὶ ταῦτα γνοίη τις ἂν ἐκ τῶν περὶ ἡμᾶς γεγενη-  
 12 μένων· ἀπάσης γὰρ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ὑπὸ τὴν πόλιν  
 ἡμῶν ὑποπεσούσης καὶ μετὰ τὴν Κόνωνος ναυ-  
 μαχίαν καὶ μετὰ τὴν Τιμοθέου στρατηγίαν,  
 οὐδένα χρόνον τὰς εὐτυχίας κατασχεῖν ἡδυνήθημεν,  
 ἀλλὰ ταχέως διεσκαριφησάμεθα καὶ διελύσαμεν  
 αὐτάς. πολιτείαν γὰρ τὴν ὀρθῶς ἂν τοῖς πράγμασι  
 χρησαμένην οὗτ' ἔχομεν οὔτε καλῶς ζητοῦμεν.

13 καίτοι τὰς εὐπραγίας ἅπαντες ἴσμεν καὶ παραγιγνο-  
 μένας καὶ παραμενούσας οὐ τοῖς τὰ τείχη κάλλιστα  
 καὶ μέγιστα περιβεβλημένοις, οὐδὲ τοῖς μετὰ  
 πλείστων ἀνθρώπων εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν τόπον συν-

<sup>a</sup> Probably the Messenians, who had been made independent of Sparta by the Thebans. See Introduction to *Archidamus*. Demosthenes, in his speech *For the Megalopolitans*, criticizes the Athenians for their folly in pledging themselves to aid the Messenians against Spartan aggression. See especially § 9.

<sup>b</sup> Such powerful states as Chios, Byzantium, and Rhodes were lost to the Athenian Confederacy by the peace following the "Social War." Of the seventy-five cities which belonged to the Confederacy the majority remained loyal. See § 2.



to save the friends of the Thebans <sup>a</sup> at the cost of losing our own allies <sup>b</sup>; and yet to celebrate the good news of such accomplishments we have twice now offered grateful sacrifices to the gods,<sup>c</sup> and we deliberate about our affairs more complaisantly than men whose actions leave nothing to be desired!

And it is to be expected that acting as we do we should fare as we do; for nothing can turn out well for those who neglect to adopt a sound policy for the conduct of their government as a whole. On the contrary, even if they do succeed in their enterprises now and then, either through chance or through the genius of some man,<sup>d</sup> they soon after find themselves in the same difficulties as before, as anyone may see from what happened in our own history. For when all Hellas fell under the power of Athens, after the naval victory of Conon and the campaign of Timotheus, we were not able to hold our good fortune any time at all, but quickly dissipated and destroyed it.<sup>e</sup> For we neither possess nor do we honestly seek to obtain a polity which can properly deal with our affairs. And yet we all know that success does not visit and abide with those who have built around themselves the finest and the strongest walls,<sup>f</sup> nor with those who have collected the greatest popula-

<sup>c</sup> Diodorus (xvi. 22) records the celebration in Athens of the victory of Chares, supporting the rebellion of the Satrap Artabazus, over Artaxerxes III. See § 8, note. The occasion of the second celebration is not known.

<sup>d</sup> The reference is to the victorious campaigns of Conon and his son Timotheus. See *Paneg.* 142, 154; *Phil.* 61-64; *Antid.* 107 ff.

<sup>e</sup> In the disastrous "Social War."

<sup>f</sup> Cf. Thuc. vii. 77: ἄνδρες γὰρ πόλεις, καὶ οὐ τείχη οὐδὲ νῆες ἀνδρῶν κεναί. Also Alcaeus fr. 28, 29 L.C.L., and Sir William Jones, *What Constitutes a State*.



ηθροισμένοις, ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἄριστα καὶ σωφρονέστατα  
 14 τὴν αὐτῶν πόλιν διοικοῦσιν. ἔστι γὰρ ψυχὴ  
 πόλεως οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἢ πολιτεία, τοσαύτην ἔχουσα  
 δύναμιν ὅσῃν περ ἐν σώματι φρόνησις. αὕτη γάρ  
 ἐστὶν ἡ βουλευομένη περὶ ἀπάντων, καὶ τὰ μὲν  
 ἀγαθὰ διαφυλάττουσα, τὰς δὲ συμφορὰς διαφεύ-  
 γουσα. ταύτῃ καὶ τοὺς νόμους καὶ τοὺς ῥήτορας  
 καὶ τοὺς ἰδιώτας ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστιν ὁμοιοῦσθαι,  
 καὶ πράττειν οὕτως ἐκάστους οἷαν περ ἂν ταύτην  
 15 ἔχωσιν. ἥς ἡμεῖς διεφθαρμένης οὐδὲν φροντίζομεν,  
 οὐδὲ σκοποῦμεν ὅπως ἐπανορθώσομεν αὐτήν· ἀλλ'  
 ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν ἐργαστηρίων καθίζοντες κατηγοροῦμεν  
 τῶν καθέστώτων, καὶ λέγομεν ὥς οὐδέποτε ἐν  
 δημοκρατίᾳ κάκιον ἐπολιτεύθημεν, ἐν δὲ τοῖς  
 πράγμασι καὶ ταῖς διανοίαις αἷς ἔχομεν μᾶλλον  
 αὐτὴν ἀγαπῶμεν τῆς ὑπὸ τῶν προγόνων κατα-  
 λειφθείσης.

Ὑπὲρ ἥς ἐγὼ καὶ τοὺς λόγους μέλλω ποιεῖσθαι  
 16 καὶ τὴν πρόσοδον ἀπεγραψάμην. εὕρισκω γὰρ  
 [143] ταύτην μόνην ἂν γενομένην καὶ τῶν μελλόντων  
 κινδύνων ἀποτροπὴν καὶ τῶν παρόντων κακῶν  
 ἀπαλλαγὴν, ἣν ἐβελήσωμεν ἐκείνην τὴν δημο-  
 κρατίαν ἀναλαβεῖν, ἣν Σόλων μὲν ὁ δημοτικώτατος  
 γενόμενος ἐνομοθέτησε, Κλεισθένης δὲ ὁ τοὺς  
 τυράννους ἐκβαλὼν καὶ τὸν δῆμον καταγαγὼν  
 17 πάλιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς κατέστησεν. ἥς οὐκ ἂν εὕροιμεν  
 οὔτε δημοτικωτέραν οὔτε τῇ πόλει μᾶλλον συμ-

\* Cf. *Panath.* 138 ; Aristotle, *Politics* 1295 a 40 ; Demo-  
 sthenes, *Against Timocr.* 210.

° In the market-place, especially the barber shops.



tion in one place, but rather with those who most nobly and wisely govern their state. For the soul of a state is nothing else than its polity,<sup>a</sup> having as much power over it as does the mind over the body ; for it is this which deliberates upon all questions, seeking to preserve what is good and to ward off what is disastrous ; and it is this which of necessity assimilates to its own nature the laws, the public orators and the private citizens ; and all the members of the state must fare well or ill according to the kind of polity under which they live. And yet we are quite indifferent to the fact that our polity has been corrupted, nor do we even consider how we may redeem it. It is true that we sit around in our shops<sup>b</sup> denouncing the present order and complaining that never under a democracy have we been worse governed, but in our actions and in the sentiments which we hold regarding it we show that we are better satisfied with our present democracy than with that which was handed down to us by our forefathers.

It is in favour of the democracy of our forefathers that I intend to speak, and this is the subject on which I gave notice that I would address you. For I find that the one way—the only possible way—which can avert future perils from us and deliver us from our present ills is that we should be willing to restore that earlier democracy which was instituted by Solon, who proved himself above all others the friend of the people, and which was re-established by Cleisthenes, who drove out the tyrants and brought the people back into power—a government than which we could find none more favourable to the populace or more advantageous to the



- φέρουσιν. τεκμήριον δὲ μέγιστον· οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἐκείνη χρώμενοι, πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ διαπραξάμενοι καὶ παρὰ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκιμήσαντες, παρ' ἐκόντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων τὴν ἡγεμονίαν ἔλαβον, οἱ δὲ τῆς νῦν παρούσης ἐπιθυμήσαντες, ὑπὸ πάντων μισηθέντες καὶ πολλὰ καὶ δεινὰ παθόντες, μικρὸν ἀπέλιπον τοῦ μὴ ταῖς ἐσχάταις συμφοραῖς περι-  
 18 πεσεῖν. καίτοι πῶς χρὴ ταύτην τὴν πολιτείαν ἐπαινεῖν ἢ στέργειν τὴν τοσούτων μὲν κακῶν αἰτίαν πρότερον γενομένην, νῦν δὲ καθ' ἕκαστον τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον φερομένην; πῶς δ' οὐ χρὴ δεδιέναι μὴ τοιαύτης ἐπιδόσεως γιγνομένης τελευτῶντές εἰς τραχύτερα πράγματα τῶν τότε γενομένων ἐξοκείλωμεν;
- 19 Ἴνα δὲ μὴ συλλήβδην μόνον ἀκηκοότες, ἀλλ' ἀκριβῶς εἰδότες ποιῆσθε καὶ τὴν αἵρεσιν καὶ τὴν κρίσιν αὐτῶν, ὑμέτερον μὲν ἔργον ἐστὶ παρασχεῖν ὑμᾶς αὐτοὺς προσέχοντας τὸν νοῦν τοῖς ὑπ' ἐμοῦ λεγομένοις, ἐγὼ δ' ὥς ἂν δύνωμαι συντομώτατα περὶ ἀμφοτέρων τούτων πειράσομαι διελθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς.
- 20 Οἱ γὰρ κατ' ἐκείνον τὸν χρόνον τὴν πόλιν διοικοῦντες κατεστήσαντο πολιτείαν οὐκ ὀνόματι μὲν τῷ κοινοτάτῳ καὶ πραοτάτῳ προσαγορευομένην, ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν πράξεων οὐ τοιαύτην τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσι φαινομένην, οὐδ' ἢ τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ἐπαίδευε τοὺς πολίτας ὥσθ' ἡγεῖσθαι τὴν μὲν ἀκολασίαν δημοκρατίαν, τὴν δὲ παρανομίαν ἐλευθερίαν, τὴν



whole city.<sup>a</sup> The strongest proof of this is that those who enjoyed this constitution wrought many noble deeds, won the admiration of all mankind, and took their place, by the common consent of the Hellenes, as the leading power of Hellas ; whereas those who were enamoured of the present constitution made themselves hated of all men, suffered many indignities, and barely escaped falling into the worst of all disasters.<sup>b</sup> And yet how can we praise or tolerate a government which has in the past been the cause of so many evils and which is now year by year ever drifting on from bad to worse ? And how can we escape the fear that if we continue to progress after this fashion we may finally run aground on rocks more perilous than those which at that time loomed before us ?

But in order that you may make a choice and come to a decision between the two constitutions, not from the summary statement you have just heard, but from exact knowledge, it behoves you, for your part, to render yourselves attentive to what I say, while I, for my part, shall try to explain them both to you as briefly as I can.

For those who directed the state in the time of Solon and Cleisthenes did not establish a polity which in name merely was hailed as the most impartial and the mildest of governments, while in practice showing itself the opposite to those who lived under it, nor one which trained the citizens in such fashion that they looked upon insolence as democracy, lawlessness as liberty, impudence of speech as equal-

democracy of Athens *cf.* *Antid.* 232. For Isocrates' political ideas see General Introd. p. xxxviii.

<sup>b</sup> *Cf.* § 6 and note.



δὲ παρρησίαν ἰσονομίαν, τὴν δ' ἐξουσίαν τοῦ πάντα<sup>1</sup>  
ποιεῖν εὐδαιμονίαν, ἀλλὰ μισοῦσα καὶ κολάζουσα  
τοὺς τοιούτους βελτίους καὶ σωφρονεστέρους  
ἅπαντας τοὺς πολίτας ἐποίησεν.

- 21 Μέγιστον δ' αὐτοῖς συνεβάλετο πρὸς τὸ καλῶς  
[144] οἰκεῖν τὴν πόλιν, ὅτι δυοῖν ἰσοτήτοιν νομιζομέναι  
εἶναι, καὶ τῆς μὲν ταῦτὸν ἅπασιν ἀπονεμούσης τῆς  
δὲ τὸ προσῆκον ἐκάστοις, οὐκ ἡγνόουν τὴν  
χρησιμωτέραν, ἀλλὰ τὴν μὲν τῶν αὐτῶν ἀξιοῦσαν  
τοὺς χρηστοὺς καὶ τοὺς πονηροὺς ἀπεδοκίμαζον  
22 ὥς οὐ δικαίαν οὔσαν, τὴν δὲ κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ἕκαστον  
τιμῶσαν καὶ κολάζουσαν προηροῦντο, καὶ διὰ  
ταύτης ὥκουν τὴν πόλιν, οὐκ ἐξ ἀπάντων τὰς  
ἀρχὰς κληροῦντες, ἀλλὰ τοὺς βελτίστους καὶ τοὺς  
ἱκανωτάτους ἐφ' ἕκαστον τῶν ἔργων προκρίνοντες.  
τοιούτους γὰρ ἠλπιζον ἔσεσθαι καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους,  
οἰοί περ ἂν ὦσιν οἱ τῶν πραγμάτων ἐπιστατοῦντες.  
23 Ἐπειτα καὶ δημοτικωτέραν ἐνόμιζον εἶναι ταύτην  
τὴν κατάστασιν ἢ τὴν διὰ τοῦ λαγχάνειν γιγνο-  
μένην ἐν μὲν γὰρ τῇ κληρώσει τὴν τύχην βρα-  
βεύσειν, καὶ πολλάκις λήψεσθαι τὰς ἀρχὰς τοὺς  
ὀλιγαρχίας ἐπιθυμοῦντας, ἐν δὲ τῷ προκρίνειν  
τοὺς ἐπιεικεστάτους τὸν δῆμον ἔσεσθαι κύριον

<sup>1</sup> πάντα Coray (cf. *Panath.* 131): ταῦτα MSS.

<sup>a</sup> For similar caricatures of the later Athenian democracy see Thuc. iii. 82. 4 ff., and especially Plato, *Republic* 560-561.

<sup>b</sup> For these two kinds of equality cf. *Nicocles* 14 ff.; *To Nicocles* 14; Plato, *Republic* 558 c, and *Laws* 757 b, c; Aristotle, *Politics* 1301 a 26 ff.

<sup>c</sup> The method of electing the various magistrates changed from time to time, and is much less simple than Isocrates here represents it to be. For example, election of the chief



ity, and licence to do what they pleased as happiness,<sup>a</sup> but rather a polity which detested and punished such men and by so doing made all the citizens better and wiser.

But what contributed most to their good government of the state was that of the two recognized kinds of equality—that which makes the same award to all alike and that which gives to each man his due<sup>b</sup>—they did not fail to grasp which was the more serviceable; but, rejecting as unjust that which holds that the good and the bad are worthy of the same honours, and preferring rather that which rewards and punishes every man according to his deserts, they governed the city on this principle, not filling the offices by lot from all the citizens,<sup>c</sup> but selecting the best and the ablest for each function of the state; for they believed that the rest of the people would reflect the character of those who were placed in charge of their affairs.

Furthermore they considered that this way of appointing magistrates was also more democratic than the casting of lots, since under the plan of election by lot chance would decide the issue and the partizans of oligarchy would often get the offices; whereas under the plan of selecting the worthiest men, the people would have in their magistrates, the archons, by lot (though from a previously selected group) is at least as old as Solon. On the other hand, in Isocrates' day officers who had supervision over military and financial affairs were elected by "show of hands" in the General Assembly. See Gilbert, *Greek Constitutional Antiquities* (Eng. trans.) pp. 216 ff. It seems clear, however, that after Cleisthenes all classes of citizens, the poor as well as the rich, became eligible to the offices (Plutarch, *Aristides* 22) and that election by lot became increasingly a device to further pure democracy.



ἐλέσθαι τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας μάλιστα τὴν καθεστῶσαν πολιτείαν.

24 Αἴτιον δ' ἦν τοῦ ταῦτα τοῖς πολλοῖς ἀρέσκειν καὶ μὴ περιμαχήτους εἶναι τὰς ἀρχάς, ὅτι μεμαθηκότες ἦσαν ἐργάζεσθαι καὶ φείδεσθαι, καὶ μὴ τῶν μὲν οἰκείων ἀμελεῖν τοῖς δ' ἀλλοτρίοις ἐπιβουλεύειν, μηδ' ἐκ τῶν δημοσίων τὰ σφέτερ' αὐτῶν διοικεῖν, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν ἐκάστοις ὑπαρχόντων, εἴ ποτε δεήσειε, τοῖς κοινοῖς ἐπαρκεῖν, μηδ' ἀκριβέστερον εἰδέναι τὰς ἐκ τῶν ἀρχείων προσόδους ἢ τὰς ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων γιγνομένας αὐτοῖς.

25 οὕτω δ' ἀπείχοντο σφόδρα τῶν τῆς πόλεως, ὥστε χαλεπώτερον ἦν ἐν ἐκείνοις τοῖς χρόνοις εὐρεῖν τοὺς βουλομένους ἄρχειν ἢ νῦν τοὺς μηδὲν δεομένους· οὐ γὰρ ἐμπορίαν ἀλλὰ λειτουργίαν ἐνόμιζον εἶναι τὴν τῶν κοινῶν ἐπιμέλειαν, οὐδ' ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἡμέρας ἐσκόπουν ἐλθόντες εἴ τι λῆμμα παραλελοίπασιν οἱ πρότερον ἄρχοντες, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον εἴ τινος πράγματος κατημελήκασι τῶν τέλος ἔχειν κατεπειγόντων.

26 Ὡς δὲ συντόμως εἰπεῖν, ἐκεῖνοι διεγνωκότες ἦσαν ὅτι δεῖ τὸν μὲν δῆμον ὥσπερ τύραννον καθιστάναι τὰς ἀρχάς καὶ κολάζειν τοὺς ἑξαμαρ-  
[145] τάνοντας καὶ κρίνειν περὶ τῶν ἀμφισβητουμένων,

<sup>a</sup> He is thinking of pay, not only for the magistrates, but for attendance at the sessions of the jury courts, of the General Assembly, etc. See *Peace* 130. Aristotle (*Constitution of Athens* 24) states that since the changes which were introduced by Aristides over twenty thousand Athenians earned their livelihood in public service of one sort or another. In the same work (62) he gives a brief sketch of the pay for such services.

<sup>b</sup> For the public spirit of the old democracy see *Paneg.* 76; *Peace* 42 ff.; *Panath.* 145 ff.



hands the power to choose those who were most attached to the existing constitution.

The reason why this plan was agreeable to the majority and why they did not fight over the offices was because they had been schooled to be industrious and frugal, and not to neglect their own possessions and conspire against the possessions of others, and not to repair their own fortunes out of the public funds,<sup>a</sup> but rather to help out the commonwealth, should the need arise, from their private resources,<sup>b</sup> and not to know more accurately the incomes derived from the public offices than those which accrued to them from their own estates. So severely did they abstain from what belonged to the state that it was harder in those days to find men who were willing to hold office <sup>c</sup> than it is now to find men who are not begging for the privilege ; for they did not regard a charge over public affairs as a chance for private gain but as a service to the state ; neither did they from their first day in office seek to discover whether their predecessors had overlooked any source of profit, but much rather whether they had neglected any business of the state which pressed for settlement.

In a word, our forefathers had resolved that the people, as the supreme master of the state, should appoint the magistrates, call to account those who failed in their duty, and judge in cases of dispute ; while those citizens who could afford

<sup>a</sup> Cf. *Panath.* 146 ; Plato, *Republic* 347 B, 520 D ; Ruskin, *Crown of Wild Olive* : " No one ever teaches well who wants to teach or governs well who wants to govern : it is an old saying (Plato's, but I know not if his first) and as wise as old."



- τοὺς δὲ σχολὴν ἄγειν δυναμένους καὶ βίον ἱκανὸν  
κεκτημένους ἐπιμελεῖσθαι τῶν κοινῶν ὥσπερ  
27 οἰκέτας, καὶ δικαίους μὲν γενομένους ἐπαινέεισθαι  
καὶ στέργειν ταύτῃ τῇ τιμῇ, κακῶς δὲ διοικήσαντας  
μηδεμιᾶς συγγνώμης τυγχάνειν ἀλλὰ ταῖς μεγίσταις  
ζημίαις περιπίπτειν. καίτοι πῶς ἂν τις εὖροι  
ταύτης βεβαιότεραν ἢ δικαιοτέραν δημοκρατίαν,  
τῆς τοὺς μὲν δυνατωτάτους ἐπὶ τὰς πράξεις  
καθιστάσης, αὐτῶν δὲ τούτων τὸν δῆμον κύριον  
ποιούσης;
- 28 Τὸ μὲν οὖν σύνταγμα τῆς πολιτείας τοιοῦτον ἦν  
αὐτοῖς· ῥάδιον δ' ἐκ τούτων καταμαθεῖν ὥς καὶ  
τὰ καθ' ἡμέραν ἐκάστην ὀρθῶς καὶ νομίμως  
πράττοντες διετέλεσαν. ἀνάγκη γὰρ τοῖς περὶ  
ὅλων τῶν πραγμάτων καλὰς τὰς ὑποθέσεις πε-  
ποιημένοις καὶ τὰ μέρη τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ἔχειν  
ἐκείνοις.
- 29 Καὶ πρῶτον μὲν τὰ περὶ τοὺς θεούς, ἐντεῦθεν  
γὰρ ἄρχεσθαι δίκαιον, οὐκ ἀνωμάλως οὐδ' ἀτάκτως  
οὔτ' ἐθεράπευον οὔτ' ὠργιάζον· οὐδ' ὅποτε μὲν  
δόξειεν αὐτοῖς, τριακοσίους βοῦς ἔπεμπον, ὅποτε  
δὲ τύχοιεν, τὰς πατρίους θυσίας ἐξέλειπον· οὐδὲ τὰς  
μὲν ἐπιθέτους ἑορτάς, αἷς ἐστίασίς τις προσείη,

<sup>a</sup> Aristotle (*Politics* 1274 a 15 ff.) states that Solon gave to the populace the sovereign power of selecting their magistrates and of calling them to account, though the selection had to be made from "men of reputation and means."

<sup>b</sup> The same idea is developed in *Panath.* 147.

<sup>c</sup> This is almost a poetic formula. Cf. Alcman fr. 3; Theocritus xvii. 1; Aratus, *Phaenomena* 1.

<sup>d</sup> The reference is, apparently, to special or occasional



the time and possessed sufficient means<sup>a</sup> should devote themselves to the care of the commonwealth, as servants of the people, entitled to receive commendation if they proved faithful to their trust, and contenting themselves with this honour, but condemned, on the other hand, if they governed badly, to meet with no mercy, but to suffer the severest punishment.<sup>b</sup> And how, pray, could one find a democracy more stable or more just than this, which appointed the most capable men to have charge of its affairs but gave to the people authority over their rulers?

Such was the constitution of their polity, and from this it is easy to see that also in their conduct day by day they never failed to act with propriety and justice; for when people have laid sound foundations for the conduct of the whole state it follows that in the details of their lives they must reflect the character of their government.

First of all as to their conduct towards the gods—for it is right to begin with them<sup>c</sup>—they were not erratic or irregular in their worship of them or in the celebration of their rites; they did not, for example, drive three hundred oxen in procession to the altar,<sup>d</sup> when it entered their heads to do so, while omitting, when the caprice seized them, the sacrifices instituted by their fathers;<sup>e</sup> neither did they observe on a grand scale the festivals imported festivals such as those mentioned in § 10. He may have in mind here the festival held in honour of Chares' victory over Artaxerxes III., since that Athenian general was so generously paid by Artabazus that he could afford to contribute a drove of cattle for the celebration. See Diodorus xvi. 22.

<sup>a</sup> Cf. *To Nicocles* 20.



- μεγαλοπρεπῶς ἡγῶν, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἀγιωτάτοις τῶν  
 30 ἱερῶν ἀπὸ μισθωμάτων ἔθνον· ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνό μόνον  
 ἐτήρουν, ὅπως μηδὲν μήτε τῶν πατρίων κατα-  
 λύσουσι μήτ' ἔξω τῶν νομιζομένων προσθήσουσιν·  
 οὐ γὰρ ἐν ταῖς πολυτελείαις ἐνόμιζον εἶναι τὴν  
 εὐσέβειαν, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ μηδὲν κινεῖν ὧν αὐτοῖς οἱ  
 πρόγονοι παρέδοσαν. καὶ γάρ τοι καὶ τὰ παρὰ  
 τῶν θεῶν οὐκ ἐμπλήκτως οὐδὲ ταραχιδῶς αὐτοῖς  
 συνέβαινε, ἀλλ' εὐκαίρως καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἐργασίαν  
 τῆς χώρας καὶ πρὸς τὴν συγκομιδὴν τῶν καρπῶν.  
 31 Παραπλησίως δὲ τοῖς εἰρημένοις καὶ τὰ πρὸς  
 σφᾶς αὐτοὺς διώκουν. οὐ γὰρ μόνον περὶ τῶν  
 κοινῶν ὠμονόουν, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ τὸν ἴδιον βίον  
 τοσαύτην ἐποιοῦντο πρόνοιαν ἀλλήλων, ὅσῃν περ  
 χρὴ τοὺς εὖ φρονοῦντας καὶ πατρίδος κοινωνοῦντας.  
 [146] οἳ τε γὰρ πενέστεροι τῶν πολιτῶν τοσοῦτον  
 32 ἀπεῖχον τοῦ φθονεῖν τοῖς πλείω κεκτημένοις, ὥσθ'  
 ὁμοίως ἐκήδοντο τῶν οἰκῶν τῶν μεγάλων ὥσπερ  
 τῶν σφετέρων αὐτῶν, ἡγούμενοι τὴν ἐκείνων εὐ-  
 δαιμονίαν αὐτοῖς εὐπορίαν ὑπάρχειν· οἳ τε τὰς οὐσίας  
 ἔχοντες οὐχ ὅπως ὑπερεώρων τοὺς καταδεέστερον  
 πράττοντας, ἀλλ' ὑπολαμβάνοντες αἰσχύνην αὐτοῖς  
 εἶναι τὴν τῶν πολιτῶν ἀπορίαν ἐπήμυνον ταῖς  
 ἐνδείαις, τοῖς μὲν γεωργίας ἐπὶ μετρίαις μισθώ-  
 σεσι παραδιδόντες, τοὺς δὲ κατ' ἐμπορίαν ἐκπέμ-  
 ποντες, τοῖς δ' εἰς τὰς ἄλλας ἐργασίας ἀφορμὴν  
 33 παρέχοντες. οὐ γὰρ ἐδεδίδεσαν μὴ δυοῖν θάτερον  
 πάθοιεν, ἢ πάντων στερηθεῖεν, ἢ πολλὰ πράγματα

<sup>a</sup> Athens was very hospitable to foreign cults, whose novelty and display made them popular and caused the old-fashioned rites to be observed perfunctorily.



from abroad,<sup>a</sup> whenever these were attended by a feast, while contracting with the lowest bidder for the sacrifices demanded by the holiest rites of their religion. For their only care was not to destroy any institution of their fathers and to introduce nothing which was not approved by custom, believing that reverence consists, not in extravagant expenditures, but in disturbing none of the rites which their ancestors had handed on to them. And so also the gifts of the gods were visited upon them, not fitfully or capriciously, but seasonably both for the ploughing of the land and for the ingathering of its fruits.

In the same manner also they governed their relations with each other. For not only were they of the same mind regarding public affairs, but in their private life as well they showed that degree of consideration for each other which is due from men who are right-minded and partners in a common fatherland. The less well-to-do among the citizens were so far from envying those of greater means that they were as solicitous for the great estates as for their own, considering that the prosperity of the rich was a guarantee of their own well-being. Those who possessed wealth, on the other hand, did not look down upon those in humbler circumstances, but, regarding poverty among their fellow-citizens as their own disgrace, came to the rescue of the distresses of the poor, handing over lands to some at moderate rentals, sending out some to engage in commerce, and furnishing means to others to enter upon various occupations ; for they had no fear that they might suffer one of two things—that they might lose their whole investment or recover,



σχόντες μέρος τι κομίσαιντο τῶν προεθέντων·  
 ἀλλ' ὁμοίως ἐθάρρουν περὶ τῶν ἔξω δεδομένων  
 ὥσπερ περὶ τῶν ἐνδον κειμένων. ἐώρων γὰρ τοὺς  
 περὶ τῶν συμβολαίων κρίνοντας οὐ ταῖς ἐπι-  
 εικείαις χρωμένους, ἀλλὰ τοῖς νόμοις πειθομένους,  
 34 οὐδ' ἐν τοῖς τῶν ἄλλων ἀγῶσιν αὐτοῖς ἀδικεῖν  
 ἐξουσίαν παρασκευάζοντας, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ὀργιζομέ-  
 νους τοῖς ἀποστεροῦσιν αὐτῶν τῶν ἀδικουμένων,  
 καὶ νομίζοντας διὰ τοὺς ἄπιστα τὰ συμβόλαια  
 ποιοῦντας μείζω βλάπτεσθαι τοὺς πένητας τῶν  
 πολλὰ κεκτημένων· τοὺς μὲν γάρ, ἣν παύσωνται  
 προϊέμενοι, μικρῶν προσόδων ἀποστερηθήσεσθαι,  
 τοὺς δ', ἣν ἀπορήσωσι τῶν ἐπαρκούντων, εἰς τὴν  
 35 ἐσχάτην ἐνδειαν καταστήσεσθαι. καὶ γὰρ τοι διὰ  
 τὴν γνώμην ταύτην οὐδεὶς οὔτ' ἀπεκρύπτετο τὴν  
 οὐσίαν οὔτ' ὥκνει συμβάλλειν, ἀλλ' ἥδιον ἐώρων  
 τοὺς δανειζομένους ἢ τοὺς ἀποδιδόντας. ἀμφότερα  
 γὰρ αὐτοῖς συνέβαινεν, ἅπερ ἂν βουλευθεῖεν ἄνθρω-  
 ποι νοῦν ἔχοντες· ἅμα γὰρ τοὺς τε πολίτας ὠφέλουν  
 καὶ τὰ σφέτερ' αὐτῶν ἐνεργὰ καθίστασαν. κεφά-  
 λαιον δὲ τοῦ καλῶς ἀλλήλοις ὀμιλεῖν· αἱ μὲν γὰρ  
 κτήσεις ἀσφαλεῖς ἦσαν, οἷσπερ κατὰ τὸ δίκαιον  
 ὑπῆρχον, αἱ δὲ χρήσεις κοιναὶ πᾶσι τοῖς δεομένοις  
 τῶν πολιτῶν.

36 Ἴσως ἂν οὖν τις ἐπιτιμήσειε τοῖς εἰρημένοις, ὅτι  
 τὰς μὲν πράξεις ἐπαινῶ τὰς ἐν ἐκείνοις τοῖς

<sup>a</sup> That is, their own sense of right and wrong (almost their sympathy) as distinguished from the legal sense. See Aristotle's distinction between equity and justice in *Rhet.* 1374 b 21. "The arbitrator," he says, "looks to equity; the judge, to law."

<sup>b</sup> Cf. *Antid.* 142, where he charges the Athenian juries



after much trouble, only a mere fraction of their venture; on the contrary, they felt as secure about the money which was lent out as about that which was stored in their own coffers. For they saw that in cases of contract the judges were not in the habit of indulging their sense of equity<sup>a</sup> but were strictly faithful to the laws; and that they did not in trying others seek to make it safe for themselves to disobey the law,<sup>b</sup> but were indeed more severe on defaulters than were the injured themselves, since they believed that those who break down confidence in contracts do a greater injury to the poor than to the rich; for if the rich were to stop lending, they would be deprived of only a slight revenue, whereas if the poor should lack the help of their supporters they would be reduced to desperate straits. And so because of this confidence no one tried to conceal his wealth<sup>c</sup> nor hesitated to lend it out, but, on the contrary, the wealthy were better pleased to see men borrowing money than paying it back; for they thus experienced the double satisfaction—which should appeal to all right-minded men—of helping their fellow-citizens and at the same time making their own property productive for themselves. In fine, the result of their dealing honourably with each other was that the ownership of property was secured to those to whom it rightfully belonged, while the enjoyment of property was shared by all the citizens who needed it.

But perhaps some might object to what I have said on the ground that I praise the conditions of with condoning depravity in others in order to make depravity safe for themselves.

<sup>a</sup> As now, from the sycophants. See *Antid.* 8, note. The present state of affairs is described in *Antid.* 159 ff.



[147] χρόνοις γεγενημένας, τὰς δ' αἰτίας οὐ φράζω, δι' ἃς οὕτω καλῶς καὶ τὰ πρὸς σφᾶς αὐτοὺς εἶχον καὶ τὴν πόλιν διώκουν. ἐγὼ δ' οἶμαι μὲν εἰρηκέναι τι καὶ τοιοῦτον, οὐ μὴν ἄλλ' ἔτι πλείω καὶ σαφέστερον πειράσομαι διαλεχθῆναι περὶ αὐτῶν.

37 Ἐκεῖνοι γὰρ οὐκ ἐν μὲν ταῖς παιδείαις πολλοὺς τοὺς ἐπιστατοῦντας εἶχον, ἐπειδὴ δ' εἰς ἄνδρας δοκιμασθεῖεν, ἐξῆν αὐτοῖς ποιεῖν ὃ τι βουλευθεῖεν, ἄλλ' ἐν αὐταῖς ταῖς ἀκμαῖς πλέονος ἐπιμελείας ἐτύγχανον ἢ παῖδες ὄντες. οὕτω γὰρ ἡμῶν οἱ πρόγονοι σφόδρα περὶ τὴν σωφροσύνην ἐσπούδαζον, ὥστε τὴν ἐξ Ἀρείου πάγου βουλήν ἐπέστησαν ἐπιμελεῖσθαι τῆς εὐκοσμίας, ἥς οὐχ οἰόντ' ἦν μετασχεῖν πλὴν τοῖς καλῶς γεγονόσι καὶ πολλὴν ἀρετὴν ἐν τῷ βίῳ καὶ σωφροσύνην ἐνδεδειγμένοις, ὥστ' εἰκότως αὐτὴν διενεγκεῖν τῶν ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλησι  
38 συνεδρίων. σημείοις δ' ἂν τις χρήσαιτο περὶ τῶν τότε καθεστώτων καὶ τοῖς ἐν τῷ παρόντι γιγνο-

<sup>a</sup> In 20-27.

<sup>b</sup> See Plato (*Protagoras* 325 c ff.) for a picture of the education of Athenian boys.

<sup>c</sup> Literally, when they are approved for manhood. At the age of eighteen, the Athenian youth submitted himself to an examination on his qualifications for citizenship.

<sup>d</sup> In early times, the Council, according to Aristotle (*Constitution of Athens* 3), not only had the duty of guarding the laws, but was the main factor in the government of the city, and punished at its discretion "all who misbehaved themselves." It even selected the magistrates for the several offices (*ib.* 8). Under Solon the Council kept its most important powers: it superintended the laws and guarded the constitution, exercised a censorship over the citizens "in the most important matters," and corrected offenders, having plenary authority to inflict punishment (*ib.* 8). Under Cleisthenes its powers declined, but because of its wise and patriotic initiative in the Persian Wars it



life as they were in those days, but neglect to explain the reasons why our forefathers managed so well both in their relations with each other and in their government of the state. Well, I have already touched upon that question,<sup>a</sup> but in spite of that I shall now try to discuss it even more fully and more clearly.

The Athenians of that day were not watched over by many preceptors<sup>b</sup> during their boyhood only to be allowed to do what they liked when they attained to manhood;<sup>c</sup> on the contrary, they were subjected to greater supervision in the very prime of their vigour than when they were boys. For our forefathers placed such strong emphasis upon sobriety that they put the supervision of decorum in charge of the Council of the Areopagus<sup>d</sup>—a body which was composed exclusively of men who were of noble birth<sup>e</sup> and had exemplified in their lives exceptional virtue and sobriety, and which, therefore, naturally excelled all the other councils of Hellas. And we may judge what this institution was at that time even by what happens at the present day; for even

became again the supreme influence of the state (*ib.* 23), and remained so until, under the leadership of Ephialtes, its important powers of supervision and censorship were taken from it and distributed to the Senate of the Five Hundred, the General Assembly, and the Heliastic juries (*ib.* 25).

<sup>a</sup> The Council was made up of ex-archons, who, after successfully passing an examination at the end of their terms of office to determine their fitness, became members of the Areopagus for life. The archons were at first “selected under qualifications of birth and of wealth.” See Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens* 3. After the “reforms” of Ephialtes, the property qualification was dropped, the only requirement being that of genuine citizenship. See Plutarch, *Aristides*.



μένοις· ἔτι γὰρ καὶ νῦν ἀπάντων τῶν περὶ τὴν αἵρεσιν καὶ τὴν δοκιμασίαν κατημελημένων ἴδοιμεν ἂν τοὺς ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις πράγμασιν οὐκ ἀνεκτοὺς ὄντας, ἐπειδὴν εἰς Ἄρειον πάγον ἀναβῶσιν, ὁκνοῦντας τῇ φύσει χρῆσθαι καὶ μᾶλλον τοῖς ἐκεῖ νομίμοις ἢ ταῖς αὐτῶν κακίαις ἐμμένοντας. τοσοῦτον φόβον ἐκείνοι τοῖς πονηροῖς ἐνείργασαντο, καὶ τοιοῦτο μνημεῖον ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τῆς αὐτῶν ἀρετῆς καὶ σωφροσύνης ἐγκατέλιπον.

- 39 Τὴν δὴ τοιαύτην, ὥσπερ εἶπον, κυρίαν ἐποίησαν τῆς εὐταξίας ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, ἣ τοὺς μὲν οἰομένους ἐνταῦθα βελτίστους ἄνδρας γίνεσθαι, παρ' οἷς οἱ νόμοι μετὰ πλείστης ἀκριβείας κείμενοι τυγχάνουσιν, ἀγνοεῖν ἐνόμιζεν· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἂν κωλύειν ὁμοίους ἅπαντας εἶναι τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἕνεκά γε τοῦ ῥάδιον εἶναι τὰ γράμματα λαβεῖν παρ' ἀλλήλων.
- 40 ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὐκ ἐκ τούτων τὴν ἐπίδοσιν εἶναι τῆς ἀρετῆς, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν καθ' ἑκάστην τὴν ἡμέραν ἐπιτηδευμάτων· τοὺς γὰρ πολλοὺς ὁμοίους τοῖς ἡθεσιν ἀποβαίνειν, ἐν οἷς ἂν ἕκαστοι παιδευθῶσιν. ἔπειτα τά γε<sup>1</sup> πλήθη καὶ τὰς ἀκριβείας τῶν νόμων σημεῖον εἶναι τοῦ κακῶς οἰκεῖσθαι τὴν πόλιν [148] ταύτην· ἐμφράγματα γὰρ αὐτοὺς ποιουμένους τῶν

<sup>1</sup> ἔπειτα τά γε Schneider: ἐπεὶ τά γε MSS.

\* With special reference to the archons, who became members of the Areopagus. He means that they were no longer taken necessarily from the best class of citizens. They did, however, have to undergo an examination (εὐθυνα) on their conduct in office at the end of their term, and a further examination (δοκιμασία) before the Council of the Areopagus to determine their worthiness to become members of that body. See Gilbert, *Greek Constitutional Antiquities* 128



now, when everything connected with the election and the examination of magistrates <sup>a</sup> has fallen into neglect, we shall find that those who in all else that they do are insufferable, yet when they enter the Areopagus hesitate to indulge their true nature, being governed rather by its traditions than by their own evil instincts. So great was the fear which its members inspired in the depraved and such was the memorial of their own virtue and sobriety which they left behind them in the place of their assembly.

Such, then, as I have described, was the nature of the Council which our forefathers charged with the supervision of moral discipline—a council which considered that those who believed that the best citizens are produced in a state where the laws are prescribed with the greatest exactness <sup>b</sup> were blind to the truth ; for in that case there would be no reason why all of the Hellenes should not be on the same level, at any rate in so far as it is easy to borrow written codes from each other. But in fact, they thought, virtue is not advanced by written laws but by the habits of every-day life ; for the majority of men tend to assimilate the manners and morals amid which they have been reared. Furthermore, they held that where there is a multitude of specific laws, it is a sign that the state is badly governed ; <sup>c</sup> for it is in the attempt to build up dikes against the spread of crime that

p. 282. What such an examination was like is described by Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens* 55. Perhaps such examinations became largely perfunctory, and this may be the ground of Isocrates' complaint.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. *Paneg.* 78 ; *Panath.* 144.

<sup>c</sup> For this idea that the multiplication of laws is a symptom of degeneracy see Tacitus, *Ann.* iii. 27 : *corruptissima republica plurimae leges.*



- ἀμαρτημάτων πολλοὺς τίθεσθαι τοὺς νόμους ἀναγ-  
 41 κάζεσθαι. δεῖν δὲ τοὺς ὀρθῶς πολιτευομένους οὐ  
 τὰς στοὰς ἐμπιπλάναι γραμμάτων, ἀλλ' ἐν ταῖς  
 ψυχαῖς ἔχειν τὸ δίκαιον· οὐ γὰρ τοῖς ψηφίσμασιν  
 ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἡθέσι καλῶς οἰκεῖσθαι τὰς πόλεις, καὶ  
 τοὺς μὲν κακῶς τεθραμμένους καὶ τοὺς ἀκριβῶς  
 τῶν νόμων ἀναγεγραμμένους τολμήσειν παρα-  
 βαίνειν, τοὺς δὲ καλῶς πεπαιδευμένους καὶ τοῖς  
 42 ἀπλῶς κειμένοις ἐθελήσειν ἐμμένειν. ταῦτα δια-  
 νοηθέντες οὐ τοῦτο πρῶτον ἐσκόπουν, δι' ὧν κο-  
 λάσουσι τοὺς ἀκοσμοῦντας, ἀλλ' ἐξ ὧν παρασκευά-  
 σουσι μηδὲν αὐτοὺς ἄξιον ζημίας ἐξαμαρτάνειν.  
 ἡγοῦντο γὰρ τοῦτο μὲν αὐτῶν ἔργον εἶναι, τὸ δὲ  
 περὶ τὰς τιμωρίας σπουδάζειν τοῖς ἐχθροῖς προσ-  
 ῆκειν.
- 43 Ἀπάντων μὲν οὖν ἐφρόντιζον τῶν πολιτῶν, μά-  
 λιστα δὲ τῶν νεωτέρων. ἐώρων γὰρ τοὺς τηλικού-  
 τους ταραχωδέστατα διακειμένους καὶ πλείστων  
 γέμοντας ἐπιθυμιῶν, καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν μάλιστα  
 δαμασθῆναι δεομένας ἐπιμελείαις καλῶν ἐπιτηδευ-  
 μάτων καὶ πόνοις ἡδονὰς ἔχουσιν· ἐν μόνοις γὰρ  
 ἂν τούτοις ἐμμεῖναι τοὺς ἐλευθέρως τεθραμμένους  
 καὶ μεγαλοφρονεῖν εἰθισμένους.
- 44 Ἀπαντας μὲν οὖν ἐπὶ τὰς αὐτὰς ἄγειν διατριβὰς  
 οὐχ οἰόντ' ἦν, ἀνωμάλως τὰ περὶ τὸν βίον ἔχοντας·  
 ὥς δὲ πρὸς τὴν οὐσίαν ἡρμοττεν, οὕτως ἐκάστοις  
 προσέταττον. τοὺς μὲν γὰρ ὑποδεέστερον πράτ-  
 τοντας ἐπὶ τὰς γεωργίας καὶ τὰς ἐμπορίας ἔτρεπον,

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<sup>a</sup> Since Solon's time, Athenian laws were posted on pillars in the "King's Portico," by the market-place. See Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens* 7.



men in such a state feel constrained to multiply the laws. Those who are rightly governed, on the other hand, do not need to fill their porticoes <sup>a</sup> with written statutes, but only to cherish justice in their souls ; for it is not by legislation, but by morals, that states are well directed, since men who are badly reared will venture to transgress even laws which are drawn up with minute exactness, whereas those who are well brought up will be willing to respect even a simple code.<sup>b</sup> Therefore, being of this mind, our forefathers did not seek to discover first how they should penalize men who were lawless, but how they should produce citizens who would refrain from any punishable act ; for they thought that this was their duty, while it was proper for private enemies alone to be zealous in the avenging of crime.<sup>c</sup>

Now our forefathers exercised care over all the citizens, but most of all over the young. They saw that at this age men are most unruly of temper and filled with a multitude of desires,<sup>d</sup> and that their spirits are most in need of being curbed by devotion to noble pursuits and by congenial labour ; for only such occupations can attract and hold men who have been educated liberally and trained in high-minded ways.

However, since it was not possible to direct all into the same occupations, because of differences in their circumstances, they assigned to each one a vocation which was in keeping with his means ; for they turned the needier towards farming and trade, know-

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Plato, *Republic* 425 A ff.

<sup>c</sup> The initiative in bringing criminals to justice was left largely to private citizens, any one of whom might bring charges before a court.

<sup>d</sup> Cf. Plato, *Laws* 808 D.



εἰδότες τὰς ἀπορίας μὲν διὰ τὰς ἀργίας γιγνο-  
 45 μένας, τὰς δὲ κακουργίας διὰ τὰς ἀπορίας· ἀν-  
 αιρουῦντες οὖν τὴν ἀρχὴν τῶν κακῶν ἀπαλλάξουσιν  
 ὧντο καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀμαρτημάτων τῶν μετ'  
 ἐκείνην γιγνομένων. τοὺς δὲ βίον ἱκανὸν κεκτη-  
 μένους περὶ τὴν ἵππικὴν καὶ τὰ γυμνάσια καὶ τὰ  
 κυνηγέσια καὶ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν ἠνάγκασαν δια-  
 τρίβειν, ὁρῶντες ἐκ τούτων τοὺς μὲν διαφέροντας  
 γιγνομένους, τοὺς δὲ τῶν πλείστων κακῶν ἀπ-  
 εχομένους.

46 Καὶ ταῦτα νομοθετήσαντες οὐδὲ τὸν λοιπὸν  
 [149] χρόνον ὀλιγώρουν, ἀλλὰ διελόμενοι τὴν μὲν πόλιν  
 κατὰ κώμας τὴν δὲ χώραν κατὰ δήμους ἐθεώρουν  
 τὸν βίον τὸν ἐκάστου, καὶ τοὺς ἀκοσμοῦντας  
 ἀνῆγον εἰς τὴν βουλήν. ἡ δὲ τοὺς μὲν ἐνουθέτει,  
 τοῖς δ' ἠπεῖλει, τοὺς δ' ὥς προσῆκεν ἐκόλαζεν.  
 ἠπίσταντο γὰρ ὅτι δύο τρόποι τυγχάνουσιν ὄντες  
 οἱ καὶ προτρέποντες ἐπὶ τὰς ἀδικίας καὶ παύοντες  
 47 τῶν πονηριῶν· παρ' οἷς μὲν γὰρ μήτε φυλακὴ  
 μηδεμία τῶν τοιούτων καθέστηκε μήθ' αἱ κρίσεις  
 ἀκριβεῖς εἰσι, παρὰ τούτοις μὲν διαφθείρεσθαι  
 καὶ τὰς ἐπιεικεῖς τῶν φύσεων, ὅπου δὲ μήτε  
 λαθεῖν τοῖς ἀδικοῦσι ῥαδίον ἐστὶ μήτε φανεροῖς  
 γενομένοις συγγνώμης τυχεῖν, ἐνταῦθα δ' ἐξι-  
 τήλους γίνεσθαι τὰς κακοηθείας. ἅπερ ἐκεῖνοι  
 γινώσκοντες ἀμφοτέροις κατεῖχον τοὺς πολίτας,  
 καὶ ταῖς τιμωρίαις καὶ ταῖς ἐπιμελείαις· τοσούτου

<sup>a</sup> That is, in training for the races at the festivals.

<sup>b</sup> There were three gymnasiums in Athens: the Lyceum, the Academy, and the Cynosarges.



ing that poverty comes about through idleness, and evil-doing through poverty. Accordingly, they believed that by removing the root of evil they would deliver the young from the sins which spring from it. On the other hand, they compelled those who possessed sufficient means to devote themselves to horsemanship,<sup>a</sup> athletics,<sup>b</sup> hunting,<sup>c</sup> and philosophy,<sup>d</sup> observing that by these pursuits some are enabled to achieve excellence, others to abstain from many vices.

But when they had laid down these ordinances they were not negligent regarding what remained to be done, but, dividing the city into districts and the country into townships, they kept watch over the life of every citizen,<sup>e</sup> haling the disorderly before the Council, which now rebuked, now warned, and again punished them according to their deserts. For they understood that there are two ways both of encouraging men to do wrong and of checking them from evil-doing; for where no watch is kept over such matters and the judgements are not strict, there even honest natures grow corrupt; but where, again, it is not easy for wrong-doers either to escape detection or, when detected, to obtain indulgence, there the impulse to do evil disappears. Understanding this, they restrained the people from wrong-doing in both ways—both by punishment and by watchfulness; for

• In Aristophanes' *Knights*, 1382 ff., the reformed Demos declares that it will henceforth make all these demagogues take to hunting and give up concocting "decrees" for the Assembly.

<sup>a</sup> The cultivated life. See *Paneg.* 47 ff.

• The supervision of the young through guardians appointed by districts survives in the later period. See Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens* 42.



- γὰρ ἔδεον αὐτοὺς λανθάνειν οἱ κακὸν τι δεδρα-  
κότες, ὥστε καὶ τοὺς ἐπιδόξους ἀμαρτήσεσθαι τι  
48 προησθάνοντο. τοιγαροῦν οὐκ ἐν τοῖς σκιραφείοις  
οἱ νεώτεροι διέτριβον, οὐδ' ἐν ταῖς αὐλητρίσιν,  
οὐδ' ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις συλλόγοις ἐν οἷς νῦν δι-  
ημερεύουσιν· ἀλλ' ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασιν ἔμενον ἐν  
οἷς ἐτάχθησαν, θαυμάζοντες καὶ ζηλοῦντες τοὺς  
ἐν τούτοις πρωτεύοντας. οὕτω δ' ἔφευγον τὴν  
ἀγοράν, ὥστ' εἰ καί ποτε διελθεῖν ἀναγκασθεῖεν,  
μετὰ πολλῆς αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης ἐφαίνοντο  
49 τοῦτο ποιοῦντες. ἀντειπεῖν δὲ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις  
ἢ λαιδορήσασθαι δεινότερον ἐνόμιζον ἢ νῦν περὶ  
τοὺς γονέας ἐξαμαρτεῖν. ἐν καπηλείῳ δὲ φαγεῖν  
ἢ πιεῖν σῦδεῖς οὐδ' ἂν οἰκέτης ἐπιεικῆς ἐτόλ-  
μησεν· σεμνύνεσθαι γὰρ ἐμελέτων, ἀλλ' οὐ βωμο-  
λοχεύεσθαι. καὶ τοὺς εὐτραπέλους δὲ καὶ τοὺς  
σκώπτειν δυναμένους, οὓς νῦν εὐφυεῖς προσ-  
αγορεύουσιν, ἐκεῖνοι δυστυχεῖς ἐνόμιζον.
- 50 Καὶ μηδεὶς οἰέσθω με δυσκόλως διακεῖσθαι πρὸς  
τοὺς ταύτην ἔχοντας τὴν ἡλικίαν. οὔτε γὰρ ἡγοῦ-  
μαι τούτους αἰτίους εἶναι τῶν γιγνομένων, σύνοιδά  
τε τοῖς πλείστοις αὐτῶν ἡκιστα χαίρουσι ταύτῃ  
τῇ καταστάσει, δι' ἣν ἔξεστιν αὐτοῖς ἐν ταῖς  
ἀκολασίαις ταύταις διατρίβειν· ὥστ' οὐκ ἂν  
[150] εἰκότως τούτοις ἐπιτιμώην, ἀλλὰ πολὺ δικαιο-  
τερον τοῖς ὀλίγῳ πρὸ ἡμῶν τὴν πόλιν διοικήσασιν.
- 51 ἐκεῖνοι γὰρ ἦσαν οἱ προτρέψαντες ἐπὶ ταύτας τὰς

<sup>a</sup> The same picture of degeneracy is found in *Antid.* 287.  
Cf. Theopompus in Athenaeus 532 d.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds* 991; Plato, *Theaet.* 173 c, d.

<sup>c</sup> Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds* 998.

<sup>d</sup> The same expression is used in *Antid.* 286.

<sup>e</sup> Cf. *Antid.* 284.



so far from failing to detect those who had gone astray, they actually saw in advance who were likely to commit some offence. Therefore the young men did not waste their time in the gambling-dens or with the flute-girls or in the kind of company in which they now spend their days,<sup>a</sup> but remained steadfastly in the pursuits to which they had been assigned, admiring and emulating those who excelled in these. And so strictly did they avoid the market-place that even when they were at times compelled to pass through it, they were seen to do this with great modesty and sobriety of manner.<sup>b</sup> To contradict one's elders or to be impudent to them<sup>c</sup> was then considered more reprehensible than it is nowadays to sin against one's parents ; and to eat or drink in a tavern was something which no one, not even an honest slave, would venture to do ;<sup>d</sup> for they cultivated the manners of a gentleman, not those of a buffoon ; and as for those who had a turn for jesting and playing the clown, whom we to-day speak of as clever wits, they were then looked upon as sorry fools.<sup>e</sup>

But let no one suppose that I am out of temper with the younger generation : I do not think that they are to blame for what goes on, and in fact I know that most of them are far from pleased with a state of affairs which permits them to waste their time in these excesses ; so that I cannot in fairness censure them, when it is much more just to rest the blame upon those who directed the city a little before our time ;<sup>f</sup> for it was they who led on our youth to

<sup>f</sup> He is thinking of Ephialtes and those who, following in his footsteps, made Athens more "democratic." Aristotle says that following the archonship of Ephialtes "the administration of the state became more and more lax," *Const. of Athens* 26.



ὀλιγωρίας καὶ καταλύσαντες τὴν τῆς βουλῆς δύναμιν. ἥς ἐπιστατούσης οὐ δικῶν οὐδ' ἐγκλημάτων οὐδ' εἰσφορῶν οὐδὲ πενίας οὐδὲ πολέμων ἢ πόλις ἔγεμεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἡσυχίαν εἶχον καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους ἅπαντας εἰρήνην ἦγον. παρείχον γὰρ σφᾶς αὐτοὺς τοῖς μὲν Ἑλλησι  
 52 πιστούς, τοῖς δὲ βαρβάροις φοβερούς· τοὺς μὲν γὰρ σεσωκότες ἦσαν, παρὰ δὲ τῶν δίκην τηλικαύτην εἰληφότες, ὥστ' ἀγαπᾶν ἐκείνους εἰ μηδὲν ἔτι κακὸν πάσχοιεν.

Τοιγάρτοι διὰ ταῦτα μετὰ τοσαύτης ἀσφαλείας διῆγον, ὥστε καλλίους εἶναι καὶ πολυτελεστέρας τὰς οἰκήσεις καὶ τὰς κατασκευὰς τὰς ἐπὶ τῶν ἀγρῶν ἢ τὰς ἐντὸς τείχους, καὶ πολλοὺς τῶν πολιτῶν μηδ' εἰς τὰς ἐορτὰς εἰς ἄστὺ καταβαίνειν, ἀλλ' αἰρεῖσθαι μένειν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀγαθοῖς μᾶλλον ἢ  
 53 τῶν κοινῶν ἀπολαύειν. οὐδὲ γὰρ τὰ περὶ τὰς θεωρίας, ὧν ἕνεκ' ἂν τις ἦλθεν, ἀσελγῶς οὐδ' ὑπερηφάνως ἀλλὰ νοῦν ἐχόντως ἐποιοῦν. οὐ γὰρ ἐκ τῶν πομπῶν οὐδ' ἐκ τῶν περὶ τὰς χορηγίας φιλονεικιῶν οὐδ' ἐκ τῶν τοιούτων ἀλαζονειῶν τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν ἐδοκίμαζον, ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ σωφρόνως

<sup>a</sup> It was not yet the "litigious Athens," ridiculed in Aristophanes' *Wasps*.

<sup>b</sup> By the sycophants especially. See *Antid.* 8, note.

<sup>c</sup> Special taxes levied for war purposes on the well-to-do citizens.

<sup>d</sup> Athens was impoverished by her wars, *Peace* 19.

<sup>e</sup> Cf. 80 and *Paneg.* 117-118.

<sup>f</sup> Demosthenes contrasts the magnificence of the temples and public buildings in Athens with the unpretentiousness of private houses in the "good old days" when the house



this spirit of heedlessness and destroyed the power of the Areopagus. For while this Council maintained its authority, Athens was not rife with law-suits,<sup>a</sup> or accusations,<sup>b</sup> or tax-levies,<sup>c</sup> or poverty,<sup>d</sup> or war; on the contrary, her citizens lived in accord with each other and at peace with mankind, enjoying the good will of the Hellenes and inspiring fear in the barbarians; for they had saved the Hellenes from destruction and had punished the barbarians so severely that the latter were well content if only they might suffer no further injury.<sup>e</sup>

And so, because of these things, our forefathers lived in such a degree of security that the houses and establishments in the country were finer and more costly than those within the city-walls,<sup>f</sup> and many of the people never visited Athens even for the festivals, preferring to remain at home in the enjoyment of their own possessions rather than share in the pleasures dispensed by the state. For even the public festivals, which might otherwise have drawn many to the city, were not conducted with extravagance or ostentation, but with sane moderation, since our people then measured their well-being, not by their processions or by their efforts to outdo each other in fitting out the choruses,<sup>g</sup> or by any such empty shows, but by the sobriety of their govern-

of a Miltiades or of an Aristides was no finer than any other, third *Olynthiac* 25 ff.

<sup>g</sup> The training and fitting out of a chorus for a dramatic festival was one of the services (liturgies) rendered to the state by the more wealthy citizens. See *Peace* 128, note. Isocrates here complains of the expensive and ostentatious rivalry in such matters. See below: "garments spangled with gold." The cost of such a service in some cases amounted to as much as five thousand drachmas.



οἰκεῖν καὶ τοῦ βίου τοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν καὶ τοῦ  
μηδένα τῶν πολιτῶν ἀπορεῖν τῶν ἐπιτηδείων.

Ἐξ ὧν περ χρὴ κρίνειν τοὺς ὡς ἀληθῶς εὖ  
54 πράττοντας καὶ μὴ φορτικῶς πολιτευομένους· ἐπεὶ  
νῦν γε τίς οὐκ ἂν ἐπὶ τοῖς γιγνομένοις τῶν εὖ  
φρονούντων ἀλγήσειεν, ὅταν ἴδῃ πολλοὺς τῶν  
πολιτῶν αὐτοὺς μὲν περὶ τῶν ἀναγκαίων, εἴθ' ἔξουσιν εἴτε μή, πρὸ τῶν δικαστηρίων κληρου-  
μένους, τῶν δ' Ἑλλήνων τοὺς ἐλαύνειν τὰς ναῦς  
βουλομένους τρέφειν ἀξιούντας, καὶ χορεύοντας  
μὲν ἐν χρυσοῖς ἱματίοις, χειμάζοντας δ' ἐν τοιού-  
τοις ἐν οἷς οὐ βούλομαι λέγειν, καὶ τοιαύτας ἄλλας  
ἐναντιώσεις περὶ τὴν διοίκησιν γιγνομένας, αἱ  
μεγάλην αἰσχύνην τῇ πόλει ποιοῦσιν;

55 Ὡν οὐδὲν ἦν ἐπ' ἐκείνης τῆς βουλῆς· ἀπήλλαξε  
γὰρ τοὺς μὲν πένητας τῶν ἀποριῶν ταῖς ἐργασίαις  
[151] καὶ ταῖς παρὰ τῶν ἐχόντων ὠφελίαις, τοὺς δὲ  
νεωτέρους τῶν ἀκολασιῶν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ  
ταῖς αὐτῶν ἐπιμελείαις, τοὺς δὲ πολιτευομένους  
τῶν πλεονεξιῶν ταῖς τιμωρίαις καὶ τῷ μὴ λαν-  
θάνειν τοὺς ἀδικοῦντας, τοὺς δὲ πρεσβυτέρους  
τῶν ἀθυμιῶν ταῖς τιμαῖς ταῖς πολιτικαῖς καὶ ταῖς  
παρὰ τῶν νεωτέρων θεραπείαις. καίτοι πῶς ἂν

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<sup>a</sup> Six thousand citizens were selected by lot each year to constitute the "Heliastic" Court. These were divided into ten sections of five hundred each, one thousand being held in reserve as substitutes. The number of jurymen required varied from day to day, and each morning the required number was picked out by lot. Service on the jury was at first without pay, but now (and since Pericles) the pay was three obols a day—a paltry sum, but fought for by the populace, to many of whom this meant "bread and butter." Cf. *Peace* 130; *Antid.* 152.



ment, by the manner of their daily life, and by the absence of want among all their citizens.

These are the standards by which one should judge whether people are genuinely prosperous and not living in vulgar fashion. For as things now are, who among intelligent men can fail to be chagrined at what goes on, when we see many of our fellow-citizens drawing lots in front of the law-courts to determine whether they themselves shall have the necessaries of life,<sup>a</sup> yet thinking it proper to support at their expense any of the Hellenes who will deign to row their ships; <sup>b</sup> appearing in the public choruses in garments spangled with gold, yet living through the winter in clothing which I refuse to describe; and showing other contradictions of the same kind in their conduct of affairs, which bring great shame upon the city?

Nothing of the sort happened when the Areopagus was in power; for it delivered the poor from want by providing them with work and with assistance from the wealthy, the young from excesses by engaging them in occupations and by watching over them, the men in public life from the temptations of greed by imposing punishments and by letting no wrong-doer escape detection, and the older men from despondency by securing to them public honours and the devotion of the young. How then could there

<sup>a</sup> At the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, Athenian triremes (ships of war) were commanded by citizens, but the crews (rowers) were made up of hirelings recruited from everywhere—the scum of the earth, according to *Peace* 79. At that time the soldiers were Athenian citizens. Later the reverse was true: the fleet was manned by citizens, while the land troops were mercenaries. See *Peace* 48.



- γένοιτο ταύτης πλείονος ἀξία πολιτεία, τῆς οὕτω καλῶς ἀπάντων τῶν πραγμάτων ἐπιμεληθείσης;
- 56 Περὶ μὲν οὖν τῶν ποτὲ καθεστώτων τὰ μὲν πλείστα διεληλύθαμεν· ὅσα δὲ παραλελοίπαμεν, ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων, ὅτι καὶ κεῖνα τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον εἶχε τούτοις, ῥαδίον ἐστὶ καταμαθεῖν. ἤδη δέ τινες ἀκούσαντές μου ταῦτα διεξιόντος ἐπήνεσαν μὲν ὡς οἰόντε μάλιστα, καὶ τοὺς προγόνους ἐμακάρισαν
- 57 ὅτι τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον τὴν πόλιν διώκουν, οὐ μὴν ὑμᾶς γε ὥοντο πεισθήσεσθαι χρῆσθαι τούτοις, ἀλλ' αἰρήσεσθαι διὰ τὴν συνήθειαν ἐν τοῖς καθεστηκόσι πράγμασι κακοπαθεῖν μᾶλλον ἢ μετὰ πολιτείας ἀκριβεστέρας ἄμεινον τὸν βίον διάγειν. εἶναι δ' ἔφασαν ἐμοὶ καὶ κίνδυνον, μὴ τὰ βέλτιστα συμβουλευῶν μισόδημος εἶναι δόξω καὶ τὴν πόλιν ζητεῖν εἰς ὀλιγαρχίαν ἐμβαλεῖν.
- 58 Ἐγὼ δ' εἰ μὲν περὶ πραγμάτων ἀγνοουμένων καὶ μὴ κοινῶν τοὺς λόγους ἐποιούμην, καὶ περὶ τούτων ἐκέλευον ὑμᾶς ἐλέσθαι συνέδρους ἢ συγγραφέας, δι' ὧν ὁ δῆμος κατελύθη τὸ πρότερον, εἰκότως ἂν εἶχον ταύτην τὴν αἰτίαν· νῦν δ' οὐδὲν εἴρηκα τοιοῦτον, ἀλλὰ διείλεγμαί περὶ διοικήσεως
- 59 οὐκ ἀποκεκρυμμένης ἀλλὰ πᾶσι φανεράς, ἣν πάντες ἴστε καὶ πατρίαν ἡμῖν οὔσαν καὶ πλείστων ἀγαθῶν καὶ τῇ πόλει καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις Ἑλλήσιν αἰτίαν γεγεννημένην, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις ὑπὸ τοιούτων ἀνδρῶν νομοθετηθεῖσαν καὶ κατασταθεῖσαν, οὓς

<sup>a</sup> The ready retort of demagogues to any critic of ochlocracy. See *Antid.* 318 and note; Aristophanes, *Plutus* 570.

<sup>b</sup> The very word (συγγραφεῖς) which was used of the board of twenty men appointed to make recommendations of a change in the constitution before the establishment of the oligarchy of the Four Hundred, 411 B.C.



be a polity of greater worth than this, which so excellently watched over all the interests of the state ?

I have now discussed most of the features of the constitution as it once was, and those which I have passed over may readily be judged from those which I have described, since they are of the same character. However, certain people who have heard me discuss this constitution, while praising it most unreservedly and agreeing that our forefathers were fortunate in having governed the state in this fashion, have nevertheless expressed the opinion that you could not be persuaded to adopt it, but that, because you have grown accustomed to the present order, you would prefer to continue a wretched existence under it rather than enjoy a better life under a stricter polity ; and they warned me that I even ran the risk, although giving you the very best advice, of being thought an enemy of the people and of seeking to turn the state into an oligarchy.<sup>a</sup>

Well, if I were proposing a course which was unfamiliar and not generally known, and if I were urging you to appoint a committee or a commission<sup>b</sup> to consider it, which was the means through which the democracy was done away with before, there might be some reason for this charge. I have, however, proposed nothing of the kind, but have been discussing a government whose character is hidden from no one, but evident to all—one which, as you all know, is a heritage from our fathers, which has been the source of numberless blessings both to Athens and to the other states of Hellas, and which was, besides, ordained and established by men who



οὐδεὶς ὅστις οὐκ ἂν ὁμολογήσειε δημοτικωτάτους γεγενῆσθαι τῶν πολιτῶν. ὥστε πάντων ἂν μοι συμβαίῃ δεινότατον, εἰ τοιαύτην πολιτείαν εἰσηγούμενος νεωτέρων δόξαιμι πραγμάτων ἐπιθυμεῖν.

60 Ἔπειτα κακεῖθεν ῥάδιον γνῶναι τὴν ἐμὴν  
[152] διάνοιαν· ἐν γὰρ τοῖς πλείστοις τῶν λόγων τῶν εἰρημένων ὑπ' ἐμοῦ φανήσομαι ταῖς μὲν ὀλιγαρχίαις καὶ ταῖς πλεονεξίαις ἐπιτιμῶν, τὰς δ' ἰσότητος καὶ τὰς δημοκρατίας ἐπαινῶν, οὐ πάσας, ἀλλὰ τὰς καλῶς καθεστηκυίας, οὐδ' ὥς ἔτυχον,  
61 ἀλλὰ δικαίως καὶ λόγον ἔχόντως. οἶδα γὰρ τοὺς τε προγόνους τοὺς ἡμετέρους ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ καταστάσει πολὺ τῶν ἄλλων διενεγκόντας, καὶ Λακεδαιμονίους<sup>a</sup> διὰ τοῦτο κάλλιστα πολιτευομένους, ὅτι μάλιστα δημοκρατούμενοι τυγχάνουσιν. ἐν γὰρ τῇ τῶν ἀρχῶν αἵρέσει καὶ τῷ βίῳ τῷ καθ' ἡμέραν καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐπιτηδεύμασιν ἴδοιμεν ἂν παρ' αὐτοῖς τὰς ἰσότητος καὶ τὰς ὁμοιότητος μᾶλλον ἢ παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἰσχυούσας· οἷς αἱ μὲν ὀλιγαρχίαι πολεμοῦσιν, οἱ δὲ καλῶς δημοκρατούμενοι χρώμενοι διατελοῦσιν.

62 Τῶν τοίνυν ἄλλων πόλεων ταῖς ἐπιφανεστάταις καὶ μεγίσταις, ἣν ἐξετάζειν βουλευθῶμεν, εὐρήσομεν τὰς δημοκρατίας μᾶλλον ἢ τὰς ὀλιγαρχίας συμφερούσας· ἐπεὶ καὶ τὴν ἡμετέραν πολιτείαν, ἣ πάντες ἐπιτιμῶσιν, ἣν παραβάλωμεν αὐτὴν μὴ πρὸς τὴν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ ῥηθεῖσαν ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὴν ὑπὸ τῶν τριάκοντα καταστάσαν, οὐδεὶς ὅστις οὐκ ἂν

<sup>a</sup> Those who did, not what the people liked, but what was for their good. So Solon is called δημοτικώτατος, 16.

<sup>b</sup> See especially *Paneg.* 105 ff.; General Introd. p. xxxviii.

<sup>c</sup> Exclusive of the Perioeci and the Helots. See Aristotle, *Politics* 1294 b 18 ff.



would be acknowledged by all the world to have been the best friends of the people<sup>a</sup> among the citizens of Athens ; so that it would be of all things most absurd if I, in seeking to introduce such a polity, should be suspected of favouring revolution.

Furthermore, it is easy to judge of my purpose from the fact that in most of the discourses<sup>b</sup> which I have written, you will find that I condemn oligarchies and special privileges, while I commend equal rights and democratic governments—not all of them, but those which are well-ordered, praising them not indiscriminately, but on just and reasonable grounds. For I know that under this constitution our ancestors were far superior to the rest of the world, and that the Lacedaemonians are the best governed of peoples because they are the most democratic ;<sup>c</sup> for in their selection of magistrates, in their daily life, and in their habits in general, we may see that the principles of equity and equality have greater influence than elsewhere in the world—principles to which oligarchies are hostile, while well-ordered democracies practise them continually.

Moreover, if we will examine into the history of the most illustrious and the greatest of the other states, we shall find that democratic forms of government are more advantageous for them than oligarchies. For if we compare our own government—which is criticized by everyone<sup>d</sup>—not with the old democracy which I have described, but with the rule which was instituted by the 'Thirty,'<sup>e</sup> there is no one who would not consider our present democracy

<sup>a</sup> See 15.

<sup>e</sup> The oligarchy of the thirty "Tyrants," instituted with the help of the Spartans at the end of the Peloponnesian War, 404 B.C.



63 θεοποίητον εἶναι νομίσειεν. βούλομαι δ', εἰ καί  
τινές με φήσουσιν ἔξω τῆς ὑποθέσεως λέγειν,  
δηλῶσαι καὶ διελθεῖν ὅσον αὕτη τῆς τότε διήνεγκεν,  
ἵνα μηδεὶς οἴηταί με τὰ μὲν ἁμαρτήματα τοῦ δήμου  
λίαν ἀκριβῶς ἐξετάζειν, εἰ δέ τι καλὸν ἢ σεμνὸν  
διαπέπρακται, ταῦτα δὲ παραλείπειν. ἔσται δ' ὁ  
λόγος οὔτε μακρὸς οὔτ' ἀνωφελὲς τοῖς ἀκούουσιν.

64 Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ τὰς ναῦς τὰς περὶ Ἑλλάσποντον  
ἀπωλέσαμεν καὶ ταῖς συμφοραῖς ἐκείναις ἡ πόλις  
περιέπεσε, τίς οὐκ οἶδε τῶν πρεσβυτέρων τοὺς μὲν  
δημοτικούς καλουμένους ἐτοίμους ὄντας ὅτιοῦν  
πάσχειν ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ ποιεῖν τὸ προσταττόμενον,  
καὶ δεινὸν ἡγουμένους εἴ τις ὄψεται τὴν πόλιν τὴν  
τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἄρξασαν, ταύτην ὑφ' ἑτέροις οὔσαν,  
τοὺς δὲ τῆς ὀλιγαρχίας ἐπιθυμήσαντας ἐτοίμως  
καὶ τὰ τείχη καθαιροῦντας καὶ τὴν δουλείαν ὑπο-

65 μένοντας; καὶ τότε μὲν, ὅτε τὸ πλῆθος ἦν κύριον  
[153] τῶν πραγμάτων, ἡμᾶς τὰς τῶν ἄλλων ἀκροπόλεις  
φρουροῦντας, ἐπειδὴ δ' οἱ τριάκοντα παρέλαβον  
τὴν πολιτείαν, τοὺς πολεμίους τὴν ἡμετέραν  
ἔχοντας; καὶ κατὰ μὲν ἐκείνον τὸν χρόνον  
δεσπότας ἡμῶν ὄντας Λακεδαιμονίους, ἐπειδὴ δ'  
οἱ φεύγοντες κατελθόντες πολεμεῖν ὑπὲρ τῆς  
ἐλευθερίας ἐτόλμησαν καὶ Κόνων ναυμαχῶν ἐνί-  
κησε, πρέσβεις ἐλθόντας παρ' αὐτῶν καὶ διδόντας  
66 τῇ πόλει τὴν ἀρχὴν τὴν τῆς θαλάττης; καὶ μὲν

<sup>a</sup> At the Battle of Aegospotami, 405 B.C., the end of the Peloponnesian War.

<sup>b</sup> Many of them had been exiled by the Thirty or had fled for their lives. Thrasybulus placed himself at their head, defeated the Thirty in battle, and restored the democracy. See Xen. *Hell.* ii. 4. 10 ff.

<sup>c</sup> One of the terms insisted on by Lysander was that the



a divine creation. And I desire, even though some will complain that I am straying from my subject, to expound and to explain how much superior this government is to that of the Thirty, in order that I may not be accused of scrutinizing too minutely the mistakes of our democracy, while overlooking the many fine things which it has achieved. I promise, however, that the story will not be long or without profit to my hearers.

When we lost our fleet in the Hellespont <sup>a</sup> and our city was plunged into the disasters of that time, who of our older men does not know that the "people's party," <sup>b</sup> as they were called, were ready to go to any length of hardship to avoid doing what the enemy commanded, deeming it monstrous that anyone should see the city which had ruled over the Hellenes in subjection to another state, whereas the partisans of oligarchy were ready both to tear down the walls <sup>c</sup> and to submit to slavery? Or that at the time when the people were in control of affairs, we placed our garrisons in the citadels of other states, whereas when the Thirty took over the government, the enemy occupied the Acropolis of Athens? <sup>d</sup> Or, again, that during the rule of the Thirty the Lacedaemonians were our masters, but that when the exiles returned and dared to fight for freedom, and Conon won his naval victory, <sup>e</sup> ambassadors came from the Lacedaemonians and offered Athens the command of the sea? <sup>f</sup> Yes, "long walls" connecting Athens with the Piraeus be demolished.

<sup>a</sup> Lysander kept a Spartan garrison on the Acropolis during the rule of the Thirty. See *Peace* 902; *Antid.* 319.

<sup>e</sup> The Battle of Cnidus, 394 B.C., re-established the power of Athens.

<sup>f</sup> See *Evagoras* 68.



δὴ καὶ τάδε τίς οὐ μνημονεύει τῶν ἡλικιωτῶν  
 τῶν ἐμῶν, τὴν μὲν δημοκρατίαν οὕτω κοσμήσασαν  
 τὴν πόλιν καὶ τοῖς ἱεροῖς καὶ τοῖς ὁσίοις, ὥστ'  
 ἔτι καὶ νῦν τοὺς ἀφικνουμένους νομίζειν αὐτὴν  
 ἀξίαν εἶναι μὴ μόνον τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἄρχειν ἀλλὰ  
 καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων, τοὺς δὲ τριάκοντα τῶν  
 μὲν ἀμελήσαντας, τὰ δὲ συλήσαντας, τοὺς δὲ  
 νεωσοίκους ἐπὶ καθαιρέσει τριῶν ταλάντων ἀπο-  
 δομένους, εἰς οὓς ἡ πόλις ἀνήλωσεν οὐκ ἐλάττω  
 67 χιλίων ταλάντων; ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδὲ τὴν πραότητα  
 δικαίως ἂν τις ἐπαινέσειε τὴν ἐκείνων μᾶλλον  
 ἢ τὴν τοῦ δήμου. οἱ μὲν γὰρ ψηφίσματι παρα-  
 λαβόντες τὴν πόλιν πεντακοσίους μὲν καὶ χιλίους  
 τῶν πολιτῶν ἀκρίτους ἀπέκτειναν, εἰς δὲ τὸν  
 Πειραιᾶ φυγεῖν πλείους ἢ πεντακισχιλίους ἠνάγ-  
 κασαν· οἱ δὲ κρατήσαντες καὶ μεθ' ὅπλων κατ-  
 ιόντες, αὐτοὺς τοὺς αἰτιωτάτους τῶν κακῶν ἀν-  
 ελόντες, οὕτω τὰ πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους καλῶς καὶ  
 νομίμως διώκησαν, ὥστε μηδὲν ἔλαττον ἔχειν  
 68 τοὺς ἐκβαλόντας τῶν κατελθόντων. ὁ δὲ πάντων  
 κάλλιστον καὶ μέγιστον τεκμήριον τῆς ἐπιεικείας  
 τοῦ δήμου· δανεισαμένων γὰρ τῶν ἐν ἄστει  
 μεινάντων ἑκατὸν τάλαντα παρὰ Λακεδαιμονίων  
 εἰς τὴν πολιορκίαν τῶν τὸν Πειραιᾶ κατα-  
 σχόντων, ἐκκλησίας γενομένης περὶ ἀποδόσεως τῶν

<sup>a</sup> In almost the same terms he praises Pericles for his adornment of Athens, *Antid.* 234.

<sup>b</sup> The bitterest denunciation of the misrule of the Thirty is in the oration *Against Eratosthenes*, by Lysias. At its close, he speaks of the sacrilege of the Thirty, particularly in selling off the treasures stored in the temples, and of their tearing down the dockyards of the Piraeus.

<sup>c</sup> An example of irony (litotes), a figure sparingly used by Isocrates. Cf. "outworn" in *Paneg.* 92.



and who of my own generation does not remember that the democracy so adorned the city with temples and public buildings that even to-day visitors from other lands consider that she is worthy to rule not only over Hellas but over all the world ;<sup>a</sup> while the Thirty neglected the public buildings, plundered the temples, and sold for destruction for the sum of three talents the dockyards<sup>b</sup> upon which the city had spent not less than a thousand talents ? And surely no one could find grounds to praise the mildness<sup>c</sup> of the Thirty as against that of the people's rule ! For when the Thirty took over the city, by vote of the Assembly,<sup>d</sup> they put to death fifteen hundred Athenians<sup>e</sup> without a trial and compelled more than five thousand to leave Athens and take refuge in the Piraeus,<sup>f</sup> whereas when the exiles overcame them and returned to Athens under arms, these put to death only the chief perpetrators of their wrongs and dealt so generously and so justly by the rest<sup>g</sup> that those who had driven the citizens from their homes fared no worse than those who had returned from exile. But the best and strongest proof of the fairness of the people is that, although those who had remained in the city had borrowed a hundred talents from the Lacedaemonians<sup>h</sup> with which to prosecute the siege of those who occupied the Piraeus, yet later when an assembly of the people was held to consider the payment of the debt, and

<sup>a</sup> Under duress. See Xen. *Hell.* ii. 3. 2.

<sup>b</sup> The same number is given in *Against Lochites* 11.

<sup>f</sup> Only those enjoyed the franchise under the Thirty who were in the catalogue of the approved "three thousand." See *Against Callimachus* 17.

<sup>g</sup> Cf. Plato, *Menex.* 243 E.

<sup>h</sup> See Lysias, *Against Eratosthenes* 59.



- χρημάτων, καὶ λεγόντων πολλῶν ὥς δίκαιόν ἐστι  
 διαλύειν τὰ πρὸς Λακεδαιμονίους μὴ τοὺς πολι-  
 ορκουμένους ἀλλὰ τοὺς δανεισαμένους, ἔδοξε τῷ  
 69 δήμῳ κοινὴν ποιήσασθαι τὴν ἀπόδοσιν. καὶ γάρ  
 τοι διὰ ταύτην τὴν γνώμην εἰς τοιαύτην ἡμᾶς  
 154] ὁμόνοϊαν κατέστησαν καὶ τοσοῦτον ἐπιδουῖναι τὴν  
 πόλιν ἐποίησαν, ὥστε Λακεδαιμονίους, τοὺς ἐπὶ  
 τῆς ὀλιγαρχίας ὀλίγου δεῖν καθ' ἑκάστην τὴν  
 ἡμέραν προστάττοντας ἡμῖν, ἐλθεῖν ἐπὶ τῆς δημο-  
 κρατίας ἱκετεύσοντας καὶ δεησομένους μὴ περιδεῖν  
 αὐτοὺς ἀναστάτους γενομένους. τὸ δ' οὖν κεφάλ-  
 λαιον τῆς ἐκατέρων διανοίας τοιοῦτον ἦν· οἱ μὲν  
 γὰρ ἡξίουں τῶν μὲν πολιτῶν ἄρχειν, τοῖς δὲ  
 πολεμίοις δουλεύειν, οἱ δὲ τῶν μὲν ἄλλων ἄρχειν,  
 τοῖς δὲ πόλίταις ἴσον ἔχειν.  
 70 Ταῦτα δὲ διῆλθον δυοῖν ἔνεκα, πρῶτον μὲν  
 ἑμαυτὸν ἐπιδείξαι βουλόμενος οὐκ ὀλιγαρχιῶν  
 οὐδὲ πλεονεξιῶν ἀλλὰ δικαίας καὶ κοσμίας ἐπι-  
 θυμοῦντα πολιτείας, ἔπειτα τὰς δημοκρατίας τὰς  
 τε κακῶς καθεστηκυίας ἐλαττόνων συμφορῶν  
 αἰτίας γιγνομένας, τὰς τε καλῶς πολιτευομένας  
 προεχούσας τῷ δικαιοτέρας εἶναι καὶ κοινοτέρας  
 καὶ τοῖς χρωμένοις ἡδίους.  
 71 Τάχ' οὖν ἂν τις θαυμάσειε, τί βουλόμενος ἀντὶ  
 τῆς πολιτείας τῆς οὕτω πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ διαπεπραγ-  
 μένης ἑτέραν ὑμᾶς πείθω μεταλαβεῖν, καὶ τίνος  
 ἔνεκα νῦν μὲν οὕτω καλῶς ἐγκεκωμίακα τὴν

\* This is attested by Aristotle (*Const. of Athens* 40) in a  
 passage which pays a high compliment to the admirable  
 spirit in which the feud between the two parties was wiped  
 out.



when many insisted that it was only fair that the claims of the Lacedaemonians should be settled, not by those who had suffered the siege, but by those who had borrowed the money, nevertheless the people voted to pay the debt out of the public treasury.<sup>a</sup> And in truth it was because of this spirit that they brought us into such concord with each other and so far advanced the power of the city that the Lacedaemonians, who under the rule of the oligarchy laid their commands upon us almost every day, under the rule of the people came begging and supplicating us not to allow them to be driven from their homes.<sup>b</sup> In a word the spirit of the two parties was this : the oligarchies were minded to rule over their fellow-citizens and be subject to their enemies ; the people, to rule over the world at large and share the power of the state on equal terms with their fellow-citizens.

I have recounted these things for two reasons : because I wanted to show, in the first place, that I am not in favour of oligarchy or special privilege, but of a just and orderly government of the people, and, in the second place, that even badly constituted democracies are responsible for fewer disasters than are oligarchies, while those which are well-ordered are superior to oligarchies in that they are more just, more impartial, and more agreeable to those who live under them.

But perhaps some of you may wonder what my purpose is in trying to persuade you to exchange the polity which has achieved so many fine things for another, and why it is that after having just

<sup>b</sup> After the Battle of Leuctra. See *Peace* 105 ; Xen. *Hell.* vi. 5. 33 ff.



δημοκρατίαν, ὅταν δὲ τύχω, πάλιν μεταβαλὼν  
 72 ἐπιτιμῶ καὶ κατηγορῶ τῶν καθεστώτων. ἐγὼ  
 δὲ καὶ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν τοὺς ὀλίγα μὲν κατορθοῦντας  
 πολλὰ δ' ἐξαμαρτάνοντας μέμφομαι καὶ νομίζω  
 φαυλοτέρους εἶναι τοῦ δέοντος, καὶ πρὸς γε τούτοις  
 τοὺς γεγονότας ἐκ καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν, καὶ  
 μικρῶ μὲν ὄντας ἐπιεικεστέρους τῶν ὑπερβαλλόν-  
 των ταῖς πονηρίαις, πολὺ δὲ χείρους τῶν πατέρων,  
 λοιδορῶ, καὶ συμβουλεύσαιμ' ἂν αὐτοῖς παύσασθαι  
 73 τοιούτοις οὖσιν. τὴν αὐτὴν οὖν γνώμην ἔχω καὶ  
 περὶ τῶν κοινῶν· ἡγοῦμαι γὰρ δεῖν ἡμᾶς οὐ μέγα  
 φρονεῖν οὐδ' ἀγαπᾶν, εἰ κακοδαιμονησάντων καὶ  
 μανέντων ἀνθρώπων νομιμώτεροι γεγόναμεν, ἀλλὰ  
 πολὺ μᾶλλον ἀγανακτεῖν καὶ βαρέως φέρειν, εἰ  
 χείρους τῶν προγόνων τυγχάνοιμεν ὄντες· πρὸς  
 γὰρ τὴν ἐκείνων ἀρετὴν ἀλλ' οὐ πρὸς τὴν τῶν  
 τριάκοντα πονηρίαν ἀμιλλητέον ἡμῖν ἐστίν, ἄλλως  
 τε καὶ προσῆκον ἡμῖν βελτίστοις ἀπάντων ἀνθρώ-  
 πων εἶναι.

74 Καὶ τοῦτον εἶρηκα τὸν λόγον οὐ νῦν πρῶτον,  
 [155] ἀλλὰ πολλάκις ἤδη καὶ πρὸς πολλούς. ἐπίσταμαι  
 γὰρ ἐν μὲν τοῖς ἄλλοις τόποις φύσεις ἐγγιγνομένας  
 καρπῶν καὶ δένδρων καὶ ζώων ἰδίας ἐν ἑκάστοις  
 καὶ πολὺ τῶν ἄλλων διαφερούσας, τὴν δ' ἡμετέραν  
 χώραν ἀνδρας φέρειν καὶ τρέφειν δυναμένην οὐ  
 μόνον πρὸς τὰς τέχνας καὶ τὰς πράξεις καὶ τοὺς  
 λόγους εὐφυεστάτους, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς ἀνδρίαν καὶ  
 πρὸς ἀρετὴν πολὺ διαφέροντας.

75 Τεκμαίρεσθαι δὲ δίκαιόν ἐστι τοῖς τε παλαιοῖς  
 ἀγῶσιν, οὓς ἐποιήσαντο πρὸς Ἀμαζόνας καὶ



now eulogized democracy in such high terms, I veer about capriciously and criticize and condemn the present order. Well, I reproach men in private life when they succeed in a few things and fail in many, and regard them as falling short of what they ought to be ; and, more than that, when men are sprung from noble ancestors and yet are only a little better than those who are distinguished for depravity, and much worse than their fathers, I rebuke them and would counsel them to cease from being what they are. And I am of the same mind also regarding public affairs. For I think that we ought not to be proud or even satisfied should we have shown ourselves more law-regarding than men accursed by the gods and afflicted with madness,<sup>a</sup> but ought much rather to feel aggrieved and resentful should we prove to be worse than our ancestors ; for it is their excellence and not the depravity of the Thirty which we should strive to emulate, especially since it behoves Athenians to be the best among mankind.

This is not the first time that I have expressed this sentiment ; I have done so many times and before many people. For I know that while other regions produce varieties of fruits and trees and animals, each peculiar to its locality and much better than those of other lands, our own country is able to bear and nurture men who are not only the most gifted in the world in the arts and in the powers of action and of speech, but are also above all others in valour and in virtue.<sup>b</sup>

This conclusion we may justly draw from the ancient struggles which they carried on against the

<sup>a</sup> With particular reference to the Thirty.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. *Paneg.* 33 ; *Peace* 94.



- Θρᾶκας καὶ Πελοποννησίους ἅπαντας, καὶ τοῖς κινδύνοις τοῖς περὶ τὰ Περσικὰ γενομένοις, ἐν οἷς καὶ μόνοι καὶ μετὰ Πελοποννησίων, καὶ πεζομαχοῦντες καὶ ναυμαχοῦντες, νικήσαντες τοὺς βαρβάρους ἀριστείων ἡξιώθησαν· ὧν οὐδὲν ἂν ἔπραξαν, εἰ μὴ πολὺ τὴν φύσιν διήνεγκαν.
- 76 Καὶ μηδεὶς οἰέσθω ταύτην τὴν εὐλογίαν ἡμῖν προσήκειν τοῖς νῦν πολιτευομένοις, ἀλλὰ πολὺ τοῦναντίον. εἰσὶ γὰρ οἱ τοιοῦτοι τῶν λόγων ἔπαινος μὲν τῶν ἀξίους σφᾶς αὐτοὺς τῆς τῶν προγόνων ἀρετῆς παρεχόντων, κατηγορία δὲ τῶν τὰς εὐγενείας ταῖς αὐτῶν ῥαθυμίαις καὶ κακίαις καταισχυνόντων. ὅπερ ἡμεῖς ποιούμεν· εἰρήσεται γὰρ τ᾽ ἀλήθες. τοιαύτης γὰρ ἡμῖν τῆς φύσεως ὑπαρχούσης, οὐ διεφυλάξαμεν αὐτήν, ἀλλ' ἐμπεπτώκαμεν εἰς ἄνοιαν καὶ ταραχὴν καὶ πονηρῶν πραγμάτων ἐπιθυμίαν.
- 77 Ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἤν ἐπακολουθῶ τοῖς ἐνοῦσιν ἐπιτιμῆσαι καὶ κατηγορῆσαι τῶν ἐνεστώτων πραγμάτων, δέδοικα μὴ πόρρω λίαν τῆς ὑποθέσεως ἀποπλανηθῶ. περὶ μὲν οὖν τούτων καὶ πρότερον εἰρήκαμεν, καὶ πάλιν ἐροῦμεν, ἤν μὴ πείσωμεν ὑμᾶς παύσασθαι τοιαῦτ' ἐξαμαρτάνοντας· περὶ δ' ὧν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τὸν λόγον κατεστησάμην, βραχεὰ διαλεχθεὶς παραχωρῶ τοῖς βουλομένοις ἔτι συμβουλεύειν περὶ τούτων.
- 78 Ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἤν μὲν οὕτως οἰκῶμεν τὴν πόλιν ὥσπερ νῦν, οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπως οὐ καὶ βουλευσόμεθα

<sup>a</sup> This paragraph sums up Athenian achievements in war which are stated at length in *Paneg.* 51-98. Cf. *Archid.* 42; *Panath.* 42 ff.



Amazons and the Thracians and all of the Peloponnesians, and also from the wars which they waged against the Persians, in which, both when they fought alone and when they were aided by the Peloponnesians, whether on land or on the sea, they were victorious over the barbarians and were adjudged the meed of valour;<sup>a</sup> for they could not have achieved these things, had they not far surpassed other men in the endowments of nature.

But let no one think that this eulogy is appropriate to those who compose the present government—far from it; for such words are a tribute to those who show themselves worthy of the valour of their forefathers, but a reproach to those who disgrace their noble origin by their slackness and their cowardice. And this is just what we are doing; for you shall have the truth. For although we were blessed with such a nature at our birth, we have not cherished and preserved it, but have, on the contrary, fallen into folly and confusion and lust after evil ways.

But if I go on attacking the things which admit of criticism and of censure in our present order, I fear that I shall wander too far afield from my subject. In any case I have spoken about these things before,<sup>b</sup> and I shall do so again if I do not succeed in persuading you to cease from such mistakes of policy. For the present, I shall speak but a few words on the theme which I proposed to discuss in the beginning and then yield the platform to any who desire to address you upon this question.

If we continue to govern Athens as we are now doing, then we are doomed to go on deliberating and

<sup>a</sup> See *Peace* 49 ff.



καὶ πολεμήσομεν καὶ βιωσόμεθα καὶ σχεδὸν  
 [156] ἅπαντα καὶ πεισόμεθα καὶ πράξομεν, ἅπερ ἐν  
 τῷ παρόντι καιρῷ καὶ τοῖς παρελθοῦσι χρόνοις.  
 ἣν δὲ μεταβάλωμεν τὴν πολιτείαν, δῆλον ὅτι κατὰ  
 τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον, οἷά περ ἦν τοῖς προγόνοις τὰ  
 πράγματα, τοιαῦτ' ἔσται καὶ περὶ ἡμᾶς. ἀνάγκη  
 γὰρ ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν πολιτευμάτων καὶ τὰς πράξεις  
 ὁμοίας αἰεὶ καὶ παραπλησίας ἀποβαίνειν.

- 79 Δεῖ δὲ τὰς μεγίστας αὐτῶν παρ' ἀλλήλας θέντας  
 βουλευσασθαι, ποτέρας ἡμῖν αἰρετέον ἐστίν. καὶ  
 πρῶτον μὲν σκεψώμεθα τοὺς Ἕλληνας καὶ τοὺς  
 βαρβάρους, πῶς πρὸς ἐκείνην τὴν πολιτείαν  
 διέκειντο καὶ πῶς νῦν ἔχουσι πρὸς ἡμᾶς. οὐ γὰρ  
 ἐλάχιστον μέρος τὰ γένη ταῦτα συμβάλλεται πρὸς  
 80 εὐδαιμονίαν, ὅταν ἔχη κατὰ τρόπον ἡμῖν. οἱ μὲν  
 τοίνυν Ἕλληνες οὕτως ἐπίστευον τοῖς κατ' ἐκείνον  
 τὸν χρόνον πολιτευομένοις, ὥστε τοὺς πλείστους  
 αὐτῶν ἐκόντας ἐγχειρίσαι τῇ πόλει σφᾶς αὐτούς.  
 οἱ δὲ βάρβαροι τοσοῦτον ἀπείχον τοῦ πολυ-  
 πραγμονεῖν περὶ τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν πραγμάτων,  
 ὥστε οὔτε μακροῖς πλοίοις ἐπὶ τάδε Φασήλιδος  
 ἔπλεον οὔτε στρατοπέδοις ἐντὸς Ἀλυος ποταμοῦ  
 81 κατέβαινον, ἀλλὰ πολλὴν ἡσυχίαν ἦγον. νῦν δ'  
 εἰς τοῦτο τὰ πράγματα περιέστηκεν, ὥσθ' οἱ μὲν  
 μισοῦσι τὴν πόλιν, οἱ δὲ καταφρονοῦσιν ἡμῶν.  
 καὶ περὶ μὲν τοῦ μίσους τῶν Ἑλλήνων αὐτῶν  
 ἀκηκόατε τῶν στρατηγῶν. ὥς δὲ βασιλεὺς ἔχει  
 πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ἐκ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν ὧν ἔπεμψεν ἐδήλωσεν.

<sup>a</sup> Cf. *Peace* 76. <sup>b</sup> See *Paneg.* 118 and note; *Panath.* 59.

<sup>c</sup> He speaks as though addressing an actual assembly which had received reports from the generals and dispatches from the King of Persia. See Introduction, close.



waging war and living and faring and acting in almost every respect just as we do at the present moment and have done in the past ; but if we effect a change of polity, it is evident by the same reasoning that such conditions of life as our ancestors enjoyed will come about for us also ; for from the same political institutions there must always spring like or similar ways of life.

But we must take the most significant of these ways and, comparing one with the other, decide which is preferable for us. And first let us consider how the Hellenes and the barbarians felt towards the earlier polity as compared with how they are now disposed towards us ; for other peoples contribute not the least part of our well-being when they are properly disposed towards us. Well then, the Hellenes felt such confidence in those who governed the city in those times that most of them of their own accord placed themselves under the power of Athens,<sup>a</sup> while the barbarians were so far from meddling in the affairs of the Hellenes that they neither sailed their ships-of-war this side of the Phaselis nor marched their armies beyond the Halys River, refraining, on the contrary, from all aggression.<sup>b</sup> To-day, however, circumstances are so completely reversed that the Hellenes regard Athens with hatred and the barbarians hold us in contempt. As to the hatred of us among the Hellenes, you have heard the report of our generals <sup>c</sup> themselves, and what the King thinks of us, he has made plain in the letters which have been dispatched by him.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Threatening dispatches sent to the Athenians because Chares had supported the cause of the rebel satrap Artabazus. See 8, note.



- 82 Ἔτι πρὸς τούτοις ὑπὸ μὲν ἐκείνης τῆς εὐταξίας οὕτως ἐπαιδεύθησαν οἱ πολῖται πρὸς ἀρετὴν, ὥστε σφᾶς μὲν αὐτοὺς μὴ λυπεῖν, τοὺς δ' εἰς τὴν χώραν εἰσβάλλοντας ἅπαντας μαχόμενοι νικᾶν. ἡμεῖς δὲ τοῦναντίον· ἀλλήλοις μὲν γὰρ κακὰ παρέχοντες οὐδεμίαν ἡμέραν διαλείπομεν, τῶν δὲ περὶ τὸν πόλεμον οὕτω κατημελήκαμεν, ὥστ' οὐδ' εἰς ἐξετάσεις ἰέναι τολμῶμεν ἢν μὴ λαμβάνωμεν
- 83 ἀργύριον. τὸ δὲ μέγιστον· τότε μὲν οὐδεὶς ἦν τῶν πολιτῶν ἐνδεὴς τῶν ἀναγκαίων, οὐδὲ προσ-  
αιτῶν τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας τὴν πόλιν κατήσχυνε, νῦν δὲ πλείους εἰσὶν οἱ σπανίζοντες τῶν ἐχόντων· οἷς ἄξιόν ἐστι πολλὴν συγγνώμην ἔχειν, εἰ μηδὲν τῶν κοινῶν φροντίζουσιν, ἀλλὰ τοῦτο σκοποῦσιν  
[157] ὁπόθεν τὴν αἰεὶ παροῦσαν ἡμέραν διάξουσιν.
- 84 Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἡγούμενος, ἢν μιμησώμεθα τοὺς προγόνους, καὶ τῶν κακῶν ἡμᾶς τούτων ἀπαλλαγῆ-  
σεσθαι καὶ σωτῆρας οὐ μόνον τῆς πόλεως ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀπάντων γενήσεσθαι, τὴν τε πρόσ-  
οδον ἐποιησάμην καὶ τοὺς λόγους εἶρηκα τούτους· ὑμεῖς δὲ πάντα λογισάμενοι ταῦτα χειροτονεῖθ' ὅ τι ἂν ὑμῖν δοκῇ μάλιστα συμφέρειν τῇ πόλει.



Furthermore, under the discipline of the old days the citizens were so schooled in virtue as not to injure each other, but to fight and conquer all who attempted to invade their territory.<sup>a</sup> We, however, do the very opposite; for we never let a day go by without bringing trouble on each other, and we have so far neglected the business of war that we do not even deign to attend reviews unless we are paid money for doing so. But the greatest difference lies in the fact that in that day no one of the citizens lacked the necessities of life nor shamed the city by begging from passers-by, whereas to-day those who are destitute of means outnumber those who possess them.<sup>b</sup> And we may well be patient with people in such circumstances if they care nothing for the public welfare, but consider only how they may live from day to day.

Now I have come before you and spoken this discourse, believing that if we will only imitate our ancestors we shall both deliver ourselves from our present ills and become the saviours, not of Athens alone, but of all the Hellenes;<sup>c</sup> but it is for you to weigh all that I have said and cast your votes according to your judgement of what is best for Athens.

<sup>a</sup> Cf. *Peace* 76.

<sup>b</sup> An exaggeration, but Isocrates dwells upon the poverty of Athens in the *Peace* also.

<sup>c</sup> See General Introd. p. xxxii.